

Another Path

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Summary: What happens if Clary never went to the Pandemonium and missed that fateful meeting with Jace, Izzy and Alec? Clary is kidnapped by Valentine along with her mother and becomes part of Valentine's plans to take over the Clave. She meets her brother, Jonathan, before ever knowing Jace. Is their love predestined? Will they still find a way into each other's lives?

1. Chapter 1 Missed Opportunities

"That sucks, Simon. Want me to come over, bring some soup or something?" Clary asked, frowning into the phone.

"N-no, no, _hack, hack_, Sorry about the plans tonight. But I don't want you going to Pandemonium without me," he groaned into the phone.

"Yeah, sure, Lewis, it wouldn't be any fun without you there anyway," she agreed. Although Simon never looked comfortable during their monthly forays to the Manhattan nightclub, Clary knew it wouldn't be the same without her best friend's steady and dependable presence. Plus who else would she jibe with?

"Well, I'm sending some good health waves to you," Clary continued, touching her right hand to her forehead as if she were really telegraphing fine fettle to Simon.

"Feel better already," Simon answered hoarsely.

"I'll come check on you tomorrow, if I don't see you at the Java, s'long partner."

After Simon said his goodbyes, Clary hung up the phone and looked blankly out the apartment window. It was another sweltering day, beginning of August, and only a few short weeks before school started

again. She had really wanted to check out Pandemonium tonight but she told Simon she wouldn't go without him and he was clearly not feeling well enough to get out of bed today. She looked down at the clothes she had laid for the club, a black tanktop, skinny jeans, green converse and a fitted light cotton khaki green shirt she had planned to wear open over the tank. Suddenly she felt a strange wave of apathy, imagining a boring night ahead without even Simon to verbally spar and crack jokes with.

"Well there's really no reason why not to go alone other than just being chicken shit about it," she thought as she looked up at her reflection in the vanity mirror in her room. "Small, plain and round," she mentally labelled the mirror, a second hand affair with an antique-like elegance in its stooped base and long lean neck that opened up to a one foot wide view of her own face. "Could be describing that too," she thought as she peered at her profile. "Whatevsâ€|"

She turned around and tossed herself onto her bed. Not a bad distance, she surprised herself. Usually the last person anyone would consider athletic but she had a strange perception of time slowing as she leaped in a surprising graceful sideways glide with her head landing squarely on her pillow. Somehow she had a vague and gnawing sensation that she was missing something important, maybe even life-changing by staying in tonight, but she dismissed this as part of her overblown, anime-consumed geeky romanticism. She picked up her sketchpad and let her pencil scratch over the sheer white surface at its own accord. An angel with golden hair, mesmerizing eyes and magnificent feathery wings effortlessly appeared.

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Clary's mother, Jocelyn, seemed especially anxious today. Mom had obviously been relieved when she came home yesterday evening and saw Clary didn't go out. Even though Clary had cleared it with her a few days ago, her mother never looked happy when Clary went out after dark and insisted on a strict 11pm curfew. Still, she was more jittery than usual and looked to be packing some things away for storage. She did this once a year around Spring Cleaning time but Clary supposed her mom was just making it a bi-annual thing this year.

Clary kept her head down, sketching her mother as she moved nimbly around the apartment, placing various items into a brown cardboard box sweeping her hands around the shelves with a dust cloth. After some time, Clary glanced at what her mother was placing in the box and realized it was a treasured photo of her mother's, Clary and Luke at Coney Island, her mother and her smiling brightly at the camera while Luke turned to look at them both with an eye crinkling grin. She was just about to ask her mother why in the world she would pack away the photo, when there was a knock at the door.

Her mother walked swiftly to the door, looked through the peep hole and some tension in her shoulders seemed to lift as she opened the door.

"Luke," her mom greeted and leaned in with a one handed hug-pat.

Luke's eyes went down, mumbled a greeting and moved into the

apartment with an armful of stacked cardboard boxes.

"Got lucky today," Luke announced. "Parking space right downstairs so we'll have an easier time getting some filled boxes in there. Ready for the trip?" Luke looked over at Clary with an upbeat wariness as if trying to put a happy face on something he knew she wouldn't like.

"What trip?" Clary asked confused.

"You didn't tell her?" Luke whispered to Jocelyn but it wasn't hard for Clary to hear him as he was only a yard away from where she was splayed on the couch.

She sat up looking at Luke and then her eyes shifted to her mother.

It became obvious that there was something up, something her mother had planned to spring on her.

"Not yet," Jocelyn said slowly as her bright green eyes moved onto Clary.

"Mom, what is it?" Clary's voice rose. She worked to control it.

"Clary, I decided to take an end of summer trip. To Luke's farmhouse, you know you love it there."

"Whaaat," Clary breathed, "How long? You know I still have another two weeks of art classes and Simon and I were planning to throw that party before school starts!"

"I'm sorry, Clary, you'll have to miss that. Simon will understand and I'll pay you back for the classes," Jocelyn hurried attempting a placating smile.

"MOOOOOMMMMMM! NO! Why do I have to go? I'm old enough to stay home by myself now. I'll be sixteen in a few days. Why are you sending me away right before my birthday!" she wailed. "Why do you do this? What are you hiding from me!"

Jocelyn's eyes grew large and she gulped before looking frantically at Luke.

Luke straightened, "Jocelyn, you need to talk with Clary. She's right. You need to tell her."

Just then, the front door swung open and Simon walked in jauntily.

"Whazzup, peeps? I'm all better," he announced as he patted his chest.

Jocelyn shrieked and Luke jumped with surprise.

"Simon, were you listening to us?" Jocelyn recovered.

"Jesus," Luke mumbled as he swepted the hair off his forehead, "I'm leaving. Jocelyn, you and Clary need to talk." Luke's long legs

stretched to the door. The door shut firmly behind him.

"N-anno," Simon responded, "Clary, I thought we were going to the poetry reading. Thought I'd pick you up rather than meet you there," Simon continued uncertainly.

Clary jumped up, grabbed her backpack and threw her wallet and phone inside it, "Yeah, we're leaving. I need some time to cool down, Mom."

Jocelyn was gripping the couch, "Clary, don't you think we should talkâ€¦"

"Later, Mom. I can't do this now," Clary moved quickly to the door, grabbing Simon's hand.

"Bye, Mrs. Fray!" Simon waved as he stumbled out, his arm stretched from Clary's tight grip.

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Simon and Clary sat back into a pair of worn mismatching upholstered chairs hidden at the back of Java Jones. There was a small stage at the front and Eric was warming up, preparing for his poetry reading set.

Clary held her steaming black coffee in both hands, letting the heat warm her fingers.

She had already filled Simon in on all that transpired at home, vehemently describing her resentment and frustration at her mother. Why did she feel like her mother was always trying to keep her locked up. She was fairly certain she had the most rigid parent in the entire school, barely able to escape her mother's constant watchful eyes. Even now her phone buzzed for the third time as "Mom" displayed on the screen.

"Clary, she'll get over it. She always does. I think she needs something else to keep her occupied. Like a boyfriend." Simon rambled.

"Huh?" Clary's own emerald gaze widened at the thought. "Are you serious? She's never been the slightest bit interested in anyone like that."

"Yeah, well maybe she should," Simon continued, peering back at Clary, his deep chocolate brown eyes glistening, "Everyone should have some passion in their lives."

Clary snickered despite her gray mood, "Wow. Just wow. That's beautiful. Loving the pass-i-onez." She reached out, lightly nudging Simon in the shoulder.

Simon leaned forward, his features abruptly intense, nervously chewing on his lip.

"Clary, there's something I want to tell you," he managed to pull out.

Clary leaned toward him, a frown on her face, "What is it, Simon? You

know you can tell me anything."

"I-uh-umâ€|" Simon fumbled. Just then Clary's phone rang for the fifth time today.

"You better get that," Simon continued, looking down almost relieved.

"OK, I think she's going to blow a gasket if she doesn't hear from me," Clary apologized, bringing the phone to her ear.

"Mom, I told you Simon and I are just at Java Jones. I'll be back in an hour," Clary started.

"NO! Clary, no, I don't want you back home. Stay with Simon. Call Luke. Whatever you do, don't come back to the apartment. It's important, honey. I love you. Do what I say," her mother rushed.

"What?! Mom, what's wrong? Mom, MOM, MOMMM!" Clary wailed into the phone as she heard a loud thumping sound and the line went dead.

She looked up and realized she was surrounded by alarmed stares. She jumped out of the chair, grabbed her bag and raced to the door. As she was stepping out of the cafÃ©, she felt someone grab her elbow and twirl her around. Her cellphone flew out of her hand, unable to keep it in her sweaty grip.

"Clary! What's happening? Where are you going?!" Simon cried, firmly holding her shoulders trying to keep her stationary.

"It's mom! Something's wrong. I have to go Simon, I have to go right now! Damn, my phone is broken," she realized as she bent to retrieve the cracked case and the black screen remained unchanged as she tried to call 911. "Call Emergency, Simon! I have to get to my mother, NOW!" she yelled as she ducked out of his hands and raced back home.

She didn't realize how fast she was going, until she noticed everything was a blur around her. It would have shocked her to stop if it wasn't a brief, secondary thought, all her focus on getting home, getting to her mother as fast as humanly possible.

When she reached the Brooklyn brownstone converted into a two story apartment building, she could feel something wasn't right. It was eerily quiet, the bulb in the foyer was out, only a muted glow from the sidewalk street lamps providing any light to continue her race up the stairs.

She halted to an abrupt stop when she reached the apartment door, wide open. The lights were on, the white rays streaming into the darkened hallway. She stepped gingerly into apartment, her eyes flickering all around trying to catch any movement or sign of her mother.

Looking around at a massive disarray of furniture, shredded cushions and canvas paintings, with no evidence of her mother, she knew it wasn't a good idea but she couldn't stop herself as she yelled out, "MOOMMM! Mom, where are you!"

"Now, ****who**** are you?" drawled a deep voice tinged with curiosity.

Clary spun around to see a tall, broad chested, middle aged man, white blond hair and black eyes blazing. By his side, her mother lay unconscious suspended in the air as if on an invisible stretcher. She looked unmarked, as if asleep. Clary noted the intake of her mother's breath as her chest rose and fell with relief.

Clary did not understand her reaction as she felt her body crouch down ready to spring at this man who under any normal circumstances she would never remotely consider attacking, being easily three times her size, muscles bulging, dressed in some kind of black warrior-like gear. But there it was again, that overpowering sensation of time slowing, unused calf muscles bunching together, arms outstretched and fingers pressed down to the ground as she vaulted at the man. He did not look surprised, only a small smile thinned his lips. He moved as if he joined her in this strange time crawling dimension, his left hand swung back and plucked her out of the air just as her right leg was about to reach his head. Tossing her to the side, her head knocked against the wall. The force of the throw denting the plaster. She felt paint chips and bits of the crumbling mortar fall over her as she lay a heap against the wall. Her head was spinning and she barely could make out his looming shape as the black dots grew and swarmed her vision.

2. Chapter 2 Truth & Lies

Clary's eyes fluttered open. There was a fading ache in her head. Her body was stretched on a bed. The mattress was board-like and stiff, a white cotton sheet covering the hard mattress and a utilitarian brown wool blanket pulled up to her chest. As memories began to drift back of her last waking moments, she sat up with alarm. Remembering her head's collision with the wall, she was momentarily surprised that her head was not spinning from her quick movements. Her fingers delicately reached up to check the damage, but she could feel no bumps or scrapes. It actually felt OK. She let her arms hug around herself as a cold wave of anxiety consumed her thoughts. It was then that she felt a swirling mark raised on the inner skin of her right arm. She didn't know what it was but upon inspecting it closely it looked like some kind of symbol. The white lines were only just visible but they felt â€| right.

Where was her mother? Was she okay? Did she wake up? That was mission one. Find her mother.

Clary got out of bed and looked down to see she was wearing a white cotton nightgown. Long, flowing sleeves with a hem that skimmed her ankles, she felt like a damsel drifting from some distant past. Certainly not something anyone she knew would sleep in. Perhaps someone's grandmother? Who had changed her clothes? How did she get here?

She moved toward a large window. It was clearly open as the sheer white drapes drifted with a light breeze. It smelled clean, fresh, invigorating really. She didn't remember ever smelling the air so energizing. Wherever she was, it was still summer. The deep warmth of the sun caressing her face as she moved the drapes aside to see rolling green hills, dotted with wildflowers, pink, yellow, purple.

The scent was a heady mix of florals and fresh greens.

She turned to look for some clothes to change into. She couldn't let herself get caught up in the beauty of this place. She had to find her mother and get out of here.

She found some cotton drawstring pants and a loose sleeveless shirt to pull over head. They were a bit large, but she rolled up and tucked in the pant legs to stay fitted above her converse sneakers she was grateful to find beneath the bed.

The door was unlocked. She crept slowly out, taking in the long hallway. It was a large house. Seemed like at least another four rooms on each side of the hallway to her right. To her left was another doorway and a stairway leading up and down.

She moved down the right hallway, leaning her head against each of the doors listening for any sounds of life within. As she reached the third door down, the door swung open to reveal the frightful man who had thrown her at a wall. He put an arm firmly down on her shoulder and bore an intense gaze into her eyes.

"Come in, Clarissa, isn't it?" he asked and pulled her into the room, his grip still firm on her shoulder.

"You're Jocelyn's daughter," he stated. "How old are you?"

It was a strange question and Clary stared at him a bit dumbfounded. His manner was abrupt but not unkind. He was used to holding attention and getting a quick answer. His black eyes grew impatient and he somehow seemed to grow larger before her.

"I'll be sixteen by the end of the week." She answered, deciding the direct approach was best with his forceful presence.

She was surprised when he didn't follow immediately with another question or comment. She could hardly see why her age was important. He looked calm but she noticed the muscles in his jaws tensing then relaxing.

"You look very much like her," he finally said, "My name is Valentine Morgenstern."

He turned away from her and moved into the spacious room. It was an office, a large oak pedestal desk at its center surrounded by matching darkwood shelves filled with books. Ceiling to floor picture windows were set behind the desk, revealing another angle of the same glorious green view she had witnessed from the room where she awoke.

"What do you know about your father, Clarissa?" he asked. "Do sit down," he continued as he gestured to the leather chairs stationed in front of the desk.

"He's dead. I've never met him. Accident before I was born." Clary clasped her left fist within her right hand into her lap. "What have you done with my mother? Why are we here?"

Valentine looked her up and down, seemingly sizing her up.

"Clarissa, your mother is safe. Tell me, do you know what you are? I could see no evidence of a life outside of the mundane for you."

"What are you talking about?" she puzzled. "Let me see her. Let me see my mother."

"Of course, in good time," he asserted, nodding his head once. "So, you know nothing it appears." He sat back in his chair behind the desk, "You are one of the chosen, Nephilim. You are my daughter."

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Clary sat in her "room." Her head swimming. Valentine's story sounded insane but somehow much of it rang true. She held an old photo in her hands. A picture more than a decade old; Her mother seated with Valentine behind her, his hand resting on her shoulder and on her lap, a beautiful baby with white-blond hair gazing calmly ahead. Her mother looked lovely, of course. She always looked lovely, but she was not smiling. Her expression was blank. Her beautiful green eyes dull, not the lively vision full of emotion that Clary had always known. And the baby, her brother, her older brother, sitting upright on her mother's lap. He couldn't have been much more three months old and yet appeared impossibly self-contained, one hand placed precociously above the other.

So she was Nephilim, a shadow hunter, a half angel-half human being placed on Earth to protect humans from demons, real-live demons. There were other wicked creatures roaming the Earth. According to Valentine, there were vampires, werewolves, warlocks and fairies; all possessed by demon blood or a demon virus.

Her mother had been deceived. Believed Valentine and her son, Jonathan Christopher Morgenstern, were dead; killed by leaders of the Shadowhunter community, the Clave. Valentine and his family had tried to leave the Shadowhunter world, unable to accept the will of a Clave who would not exact retribution for the murder of Valentine's father, her grandfather, at the hands of vampires. The Clave viewed the Morgensterns as trouble-makers and accepted the lies spouted by these vampires, that they were only defending themselves from Morgenstern fanaticism. But the Clave would not allow a peaceful departure, forcing Valentine to flee with his son. Jocelyn in turn escaped with Clary, taking every precaution to hide them both from the Shadowhunter world and certain death.

Valentine had spent all these years searching for Jocelyn, not even knowing that she had borne their second child. When he finally discovered her it seemed a warlock, employed by the Clave, has also found her and placed her under a spell to transport her quietly back to the Clave. Valentine had come upon this scene just as the warlock was about to take her away and he had eliminated the warlock just before Clary arrived.

At this point in Valentine's story, Clary had grown so weary, shell shocked at the possibilities of this tale that Valentine agreed to continue at a later time. He instructed her to go to her room and lie down; that someone would bring her a meal and he would procure suitable attire for her. Starting tomorrow she would begin training.

Apparently she was years behind the appropriate shadowhunter training but Valentine noted approvingly she was naturally gifted.

Clary had not seen another soul since her meeting with Valentine. Surely there were other people here. A house this size could not be maintained by a bachelor and his son alone. It dawned on her then that she had a brother. Something she had longed for as she grew up an only child. Someone who knew her, who could share her thoughts and protect her.

Just then, there was a knock at the door. It was a firm rap. The door opened and there stood a tall, white-haired boy. He was all white and black. Pale skin, white-blond hair and the deepest, darkest eyes she had ever seen. He was lean, sinewy and completely gorgeous. She couldn't tell how long they just stared at each other. She knew who he was and felt thoroughly overwhelmed. His coloring and height marked him as Valentine's child but she could also see her mother in his fine features, sharp cheekbones and high forehead. She couldn't begin to describe the tumult of emotions she was experiencing.

"I've brought you something to eat," he stated, his eyes never leaving her face as he set down a tray with a sandwich, carrot sticks and a bowl of soup. "I never knew you existed. I'm Jonathan, your brother."

"Clary. I'm Clary. I am I'm so glad to meet you," she said haltingly.

"I'm so glad to know you, sister," he answered and walked toward her. Sitting down on the bed beside her, he reached over and gently brushed her cheek with his fingers. They were rough and callused but everything about him emanated strength.

She unconsciously moved her face into his hand and closed her eyes for a brief moment. When she opened them, he was still staring intensely into them. She couldn't tell what he was thinking or feeling despite the mild nature of his touch.

He lowered his hand then, "We'll begin training tomorrow. Father has tasked me with your combat regimen. He will teach you the runes."

He stood up without breaking their gaze then finally turned and walked out of the room. She realized how draining that experience was once he left the room. Completely exhausted, she crawled under the covers and let the fatigue carry her away from consciousness.

3. Chapter 3 Jonathan

Jonathan had not known what to expect but he certainly had not expected the reality of her. A tiny thing, delicate porcelain features and long, glossy, flaming curls, but that steely emerald gaze had bizarrely cleared all thoughts from his head. For a moment he had no preconceived intentions to conquer and subjugate. It was disconcerting.

He was in the training room, kicking and punching at the heavy punching bag hung by a thick iron chain attached to the rafters above. With a nimble pivot he flung two throwing knives at the target stationed at the other side of the room, a good fifty feet away, both

landing squarely in its center with a resounding thunk. He continued his workout, his mind drifting to an earlier conversation with his father.

"You understand the story, Jonathan," his father commanded, "You must not diverge from it."

"Yes, father, of course," Jonathan kept his watchful eyes on his father, to store away for his usual examination and careful dissection of his father's objectives. "Is she like me?" Jonathan was startled the words came out of his mouth. He had taken in the news that he had a sister without a flicker of emotion, a picture of interminable calm but his mind was not so controlled in this case.

"She is her mother's child. Your mother," Valentine amended. "Her veins course with angel's blood. Yours do not. You know this."

"She is also your child as am I," Jonathan once again did not understand himself. Experience had taught him his father possessed little patience and may construe his comments as argumentative.

Something flickered in Valentine's eyes but Jonathan could not catch its meaning. "You are my child. You are a warrior and the best shadowhunter of any generation. Together we will clean the taint of the Clave's old world views and forge a new order of shadowhunters, revered and vaunted as the heroes of the human race."

Jonathan only nodded.

"You must make her trust you. You must make her love you. She will not confess her secrets to me. She is wary of me. I believe she holds the key to finding the mortal cup. She has some special abilities. I can feel it and I will find out what they are."

"Very well, father," Jonathan accepted, lowering his head but not his eyes.

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Jonathan came to her door at the appointed time, 2pm, after her morning studies with their father. He had not seen her since they had met and felt a buzzy excitement he only felt when dispatching an opponent. He stood at her door for a few minutes trying to decipher what it meant, whether it was a weakness or a boon. Finally he gave up. He only knew he wanted to see her. He would fulfil his father's mission and he would do it well as he always did.

He knocked on the door, heard her murmured invitation and opened it. She was ready for him. Dressed in training gear, loose baggy pants and a more fitted tank; her bright hair held tightly away from her face in a high bun. He could see she was not left unmarked from her tutorial with their father. Her arms blazed with runes. The Voyance rune, of course, strength, agility, far sightedness and sure footedness. He was a bit amazed that she could handle the impact of so many runes so quickly. She had only ever been marked with an iratze healing rune and it typically took a year before a shadowhunter beginning training could control the effect of multiple runes at once.

He felt a tinge of anxiety that he could not place and realized he was actually worried for her welfare. This was a revelation. He had never felt any sympathy or concern for anyone. It had always been a subterfuge, a mask of human emotion.

Her green eyes were hard but sparkled. They brandished her determination. She had been hurt. That was clear and not surprising after an encounter with their father. He would not pry but he had practiced kindness, had been painstakingly trained to charm, exude empathy, and foster rapport.

"Are you ready, Clary? Can you do this now?" he asked gently.

"Yes, let's do this." She responded, gliding toward him and clasped his hand in hers.

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They had trained for a full three hours. It was remarkable how quickly she picked up the techniques. It would not take long before she could join him in a live fight. She was using wooden practice swords on a dummy, learning to swing with force through the core. The runes on her arm had faded an hour ago but she persevered, her body glistening with sweat that clung to her workout gear.

"That's enough, Clary. This is your first day, you don't want to make it impossible for yourself to train tomorrow." Jonathan smiled. "You must be hungry. Come, we'll eat together."

"I need to be ready. I have to defend my mother & my family. Valentine told me. They're coming for us. Unless we stop them first," she answered.

"Clary, you have my promise. You will be completely ready to fight, to defend our mother and destroy the Clave. I will be by your side all the way and to the end. I am your family and I will take care of you," Jonathan affirmed, "But you must rest now."

It felt easy and natural to walk over to her, take her by the shoulders and hold her against him. They were both hot and sweaty but holding her felt good. His chin rested above her head. He felt her turn her head to the side and press her cheek to his chest. She sighed and he could feel her release some tension from her body.

"Good girl." Still embracing her shoulders, he led her out of the training room after returning the practice swords to their stand. They walked to her room.

"I'll be back in twenty minutes." Jonathan cupped her face between his hands and tenderly brushed her cheeks with his thumbs. He realized he was becoming lost in her eyes. They stood very close as he bent his head and lightly caressed her lips with his own. As he pulled back, he could see her surprise. Her eyes were luminous and her mouth had opened slightly. The sight of her pink, cushiony lips shaped in an "o" made him want to press his mouth over hers again and again but he knew she would draw away.

He stepped back and grinned, tapping a finger under her chin, "Don't

want you catching any flies in that pretty mouth of yours."

She frowned with consternation, then shook her head and turned into her room.

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Jonathan paused by her door. He had quickly showered and dressed in slender black slacks and a snug long sleeve black shirt. He knew the outfit emphasized his long lean body and muscled frame. He was about to knock and summon Clary for dinner when he heard a crack and the thumping sound of collapsing weight.

"That is enough," Valentine's deep voice boomed. "You will not question me. This is a warning. Ordinarily such insolence would earn a whipping."

Jonathan could hear Valentine's heavy steps reach the door. He moved swiftly to the side as the door swung open. Valentine's face was slightly flushed. Jonathan recognized the rigid stance that usually preceded a beating. Seeing Jonathan standing by the doorway, Valentine turned to him.

"You must teach Clary the error of her ways. I will not so easily forgive another outburst." He proceeded away, quickly disappearing down the stairs.

Jonathan turned back into Clary's room and slowly moved in to survey the damage. She was on the floor, on her knees, a hand held up, covering a large red welt on her face and her eyes glittering with unshed tears. There was unmistakable white fury in her hard gemlike eyes. He walked over and knelt beside her, facing her.

"Clary, what did you do?" he asked softly.

"I want to see my mother and I want to go back to Brooklyn. Luke and my best friend, Simon, need to know I'm OK. They must be worried sick." Her voice was stony.

"Valentine is not a kind man. He is exacting and expects nothing less than perfect obedience," Jonathan continued in a gentle tone. "But he is our father. He does what he must to protect us, to make us strong, invincible." Jonathan reached out and lifted her hand away from her face. He saw the clear outline of the blow. It would leave an ugly bruise but he knew his father. He would not want this iratzed away. He would want Clary to see the damage, feel the pain and remember how he repaid disrespect.

"This isn't right. He isn't right." Clary would not back down.

Jonathan found himself surprised by her resolve; that she was not afraid. She was always surprising him. Once again, she spurred something in him. Something he could not name and had never experienced before. He wanted to kiss her again. Desire ignited inside him. It thoroughly perplexed him.

"You are my sister. You and I are one and the same. Finally, there is another like me," he declared involuntarily.

Her eyes widened. She looked confused. "Yes, you are my brother. Of course I'm glad we discovered each other but I don't know. I'm not sure we are so alike."

"I'm sorry. I don't mean to alarm you," he smiled tenderly. "It's just I've always been alone, just me and father and now you're here and it's like I've woken from a dream." He didn't know where the words came from. He knew his mission. He knew he had to make her trust him, care for him, but he could not calculate. His mind would not cooperate.

She looked touched, moved closer, put her arms around his neck and hugged him. "How about that dinner, then?"

4. Chapter 4 Another Jonathan

There were no calendars in the manor to mark the passing days. Clary had been superciliously informed by her father this was not a house, it was a manor. She did not like the man. He was cold and hard and she could not detect any affection in his treatment of her. At times she felt like he hated her, that he harbored a steep resentment against her that he could not completely hide. But she learned to admire his knowledge, the sheer power and confidence he exuded.

He had finally allowed her to visit her mother. At first the sight of her mother, prostrate and helpless on a large canopied bed, frightened her deeply. She was under a powerful enchantment Valentine explained. It preserved her body in stasis. She required no sustenance. She just slept. Unlike his treatment of his daughter, he seemed to dote on his wife. Was she still his wife? After more than sixteen years apart, could they still be considered husband and wife? Evidently Valentine thought so. He spent several hours each day with her mother. She had observed him gently brushing her hair, holding her hand, whispering into her ear.

He had taught Clary the runes and given her a stele. It was as if an appendage she hadn't even known was missing had been reattached and a whole new world opened to her. She learned every rune in the gray book. Valentine did not say anything but she knew he marveled at this. He was constantly testing her, instructing her to draw the most random obscure runes like slowed breath, acute smelling and freed inhibition at any given moment. Once he had even commanded she draw a portal rune, something that did not exist in the gray book. It flashed in her mind's eye and she created it. He had been speechless then and ceased testing her.

Still, the best part of her day was training with Jonathan. He was a wonderful teacher. Patient, encouraging, firm, he knew how to get the best out of her. She was amazed at the changes in her body and her physical abilities. Her muscles grew compact and unyielding. Her posture improved and she felt as if she had grown.

Her feelings for her brother were hard to describe. Their training took up at least six hours a day. It was easy to lose herself in the whirl of brute exertion. Leaps, kicks, strikes and the handling of myriad weapons filled their time. Somehow they were beautiful to her now. Their gleaming strength, the flash of a true hit; this sent a thrill up her spine. Watching Jonathan move with an astonishing swiftness and inhuman grace, his devastating blows and throws; that

was beautiful. He was her inspiration and her guide.

She suffered under Valentine's attentions. He had no cause to strike her again and he seemed to take some pride at what she achieved. He encouraged her to spend some time alone each day to see if she could unlock any other undiscovered runes. He did not push her and did not seem disappointed when she had nothing new to show him. He was vastly pleased with the portal rune even though it seemed only she could wield it. Neither Valentine or Jonathan could accomplish it. It simply would not hold for them. The black and silver swirls would appear for only a flashing moment when they attempted the rune.

She had accompanied Valentine and Jonathan through one of her rune created portals. They had transported back to her Brooklyn apartment, marked with glamour runes to keep them invisible from ordinary eyes. It seemed as the portal's creator she had to deem where it sent them and it had to be a place she could clearly envision. Her father explained that they were searching for the mortal cup. With it they would spawn a new race of shadowhunters loyal to his righteous cause. Her mother had stolen it away from the Clave to fulfil their vision but they were separated before she could bring it to him and bring their plans to fruition. Jocelyn had believed Valentine and her son were dead, killed by the uncompromising will of the Council and gave up their plans. All her efforts focused on keeping Clary and herself away from the clutches of the Clave. Something inside her did not entirely believe Valentine but he spoke with such conviction. There was no pause or waver to his voice and his imposing charisma seemed to overpower her uncertainty.

The apartment was bare. Clary did not know who removed all their furnishings. It hurt. It felt like someone had carried away all traces of her life with her mother and discarded them. She whispered as much in Jonathan's ear. He looked down at her then, his onyx eyes glittering. He draped an arm over her shoulders and his other hand gently cupped her face.

"You are my life now and I am yours," he replied.

Clary did not know how to respond to such declarations. She knew their relationship was not like ordinary siblings but she tried to reassure herself that this was because they were demon killing machines who had not known of each other's existence until a few short months ago. She could not deny he was the only comfort in her daily life; that she depended on him and warmed at the sight of him. She did not want or try to examine these feelings.

"We should really see Luke. If anyone knows anything, he would," Clary spoke quickly in a hushed voice. She knew Valentine detested any mention of Luke. He would not tell her why or what happened but they knew each other and somehow Luke had wronged him. Why her mother would befriend this man, in fact so implicitly trust him that she would often leave her child in his care and make him her closest confidante was a subject she was not permitted to broach and added to the skepticism she sometimes fought to keep out of her thoughts. She wanted to believe Valentine. She would not define her feelings for her brother but she knew she would break without him and he would never defy their father.

"Clary," her father summoned. "Think. There must be something you know. Something that will aid our search."

Clary swallowed and closed her eyes. She racked her memories trying to come up with something. Suddenly her mind went blank and a glowing image came to her. It was unusual in its lack of elegant swirls and dips. Dashing lines formed a box, a circle inside it with thick rays darting from it like a sun. "To divine," she uttered.

"What was that?" Valentine questioned. Both he and Jonathan watched her carefully.

"A new rune, father. One that will lead us to the mortal cup," she answered. Even as she said the words she knew this rune was something more but she had to uncover its mysteries on her own.

"Do it then," her father commanded.

She moved to a bare white wall and proceeded to draw the rune with thick slashes and dots. It shimmered brightly, pulsing as if waiting for something.

"The mortal cup," she named. The glowing rune disappeared and in its place was a shadowy image. A tall golden haired, golden eyed boy stood before her. He held out a large, heavy card, larger than his hand. It held a picture of a bejeweled aureate cup painted in her mother's unmistakable strokes. Then, the specter dissolved.

"Jonathan," her father said faintly.

"The other one," her brother uttered in a derisive tone. Clary's eyes widened at her brother. She had never heard his voice so cold. She wondered that they knew this boy. He had a regal yet predatory demeanor that reminded her of a lion. He looked about her brother's age, seventeen, with a similar lean yet well-muscled form. He had been dressed in the black gear she had come to know as the shadowhunter's warrior uniform. He was a shadowhunter.

"Are they all so beautiful?" she thought to herself, then shook her head as she realized she was a shadowhunter as well.

"I will need to ponder these developments," Valentine finally broke the silence. "Clary create a portal home."

5. Chapter 5 Enter Magnus Bane

**Hi folks, I'm still getting the hang of publishing on fanfiction. I love the TMI series and have had so much fun reading a lot of the works on this site. Some really great ideas. I wish I came up with them! Anyway, I truly appreciate any follows, favorites and reviews. Hope you enjoy. **

Disclaimer: Cassandra Clare is the genius who came up with it all. Love her and love her writing.

* * *

><p>Magnus Bane did not believe he was doing the smart thing. But then again, he was hardly known for being smart. Impetuous and brilliant, yes, but no, not smart, never smart. He sighed deeply as

he made his way to the Clave's New York Institute. It was impressive if you liked archaic, gothic and colossal architecture but that did not float Magnus' boat.<p>

It was generally a bad idea to get involved with shadowhunters. He had a few run-ins with them in the past and as a whole their lot had treated him with disdain. Oh he was plenty good enough to be called in for some assignment that required his magical expertise but there was an expectation that he should be summoned and dismissed at their whim. Even so, he did not always answer their call. Sometimes he just could not be bothered despite the exorbitant fees he charged.

It had actually been years since he visited the NY institute in Manhattan even though he resided a fairly short distance away at a waterfront loft in Brooklyn. The heads of the institute, Maryse and Robert, had too much of the Lightwood imperiousness to suit his taste. This time, though, he was not coming to them to answer their call. This time he had some alarming news to impart. He hoped he was doing the right thing. He already knew it wasn't smart but he could not just pretend he didn't know anything. Not when it could very well mean a catastrophic turn of events.

He had already sent a message to the Lightwoods to expect his visit so he was a bit surprised when he knocked at the heavy wooden door it opened to a pair of midnight blue eyes set against a chiseled alabaster face topped with a tousled sweep of thick black hair. It was a very young shadowhunter. He was just slightly shorter than Magnus which meant he was very tall. Magnus almost never encountered anyone who came so close to his own height. Now this one, this one definitely floated his boat.

"Hi," Magnus smiled lazily. "I believe Maryse and Robert Lightwood are expecting me?"

"Um, yeah, okay," the dreamy shadowhunter responded. "Come in, I'll show you the way."

As Magnus followed his trail, he noticed this shadowhunter moved with a slouch, as if he wanted to deflect attention. It was unusual for a shadowhunter and especially unusual for such an exquisite human specimen.

"I'm Alec, by the way," the shadowhunter announced shyly.

"Charmed. I'm Magnus Bane, high warlock of Brooklyn."

They stopped at the library and entered the chamber. Magnus walked in and was greeted by the sight of four Nephilim already assembled casually at the front of the room. Maryse stood at the center, behind the large marble desk held up by the straining visages of carved angels. Two young shadowhunters stood to her right. One was all tawny and gold. Gold hair, gold eyes. He was carelessly leaning against a reading table with an arrogant but sharply assessing gaze. The other was a younger version of Maryse. Tall and confident, long straight black hair without a strand out of place. Both were quite lovely to look at in all their proud youthful glory but couldn't hold a candle to Alec, thought Magnus.

At Maryse's left was someone not so pleasant to behold. Hodge Starkweather stood, a large black bird perched on his shoulder. His

face was lined and well worn. The years had taken a heavy toll. Magnus knew Hodge was about the same age as Maryse but looked much older.

"So, Magnus," Maryse took charge. "You wanted to talk. Tell us what is so important that you would grace us with your presence. I'd begun to think that you left New York altogether. You haven't answered our calls over the last ten years," she said in a rebuking tone.

"Very busy," Magnus replied. "Anyway, I knew a lesser warlock could provide the services you required and I thought I'd spare you my expense," he said with a gracious bow. "Now for the matter at hand," Magnus continued. "Some Nephilim have disappeared. Abducted without a trace. Mother and daughter."

"What?" Maryse looked surprised. "How would you know this and more importantly, why wouldn't I?"

"It's an unusual case." Magnus sat down, folding one leg over the other. "The mother is Jocelyn Morgenstern."

Maryse looked shocked. Finally, she sat back, her hands flat on the desk. "She was here? In New York, all these years?"

Yes, in Brooklyn actually. She came to me. She had to protect her child. She never believed Valentine perished. She wanted a normal life for them, safe, away from the Nephilim."

Maryse stayed silent. She looked amazed. There was a shuffle and a scraping sound as Hodge appeared to stumble back and leaned heavily against a chair. His face took on a sickly gray pallor.

"Well, if she turned her back on the Nephilim, what is she to us?" asked the golden one. He stood straight, looking concerned at Maryse who also grew quite pale.

"Exactly," mouthed mini-Maryse who was now scowling at Magnus.

"Jace. Isabelle." Maryse seemed to waken from her stupor, naming the two shadowhunters Magnus did not know. "Jocelyn was Valentine's wife. The child â€¦ is it ...?"

"Yes," Magnus answered. "A girl. Valentine's child."

"And â€¦ who took them? How do you know they didn't just leave?" Maryse asked thinly.

"I had an appointment with them. When they didn't show and I heard nothing from Jocelyn, I went to check on them. Their apartment was a shambles and I was able to weave a past-present spell. I could see the last few minutes of their presence in the apartment. Valentine had his wife. She was unconscious and then the girl arrived." Magnus paused then, struck by the memory of the vision. "She attacked him but he disabled her quickly. He took them both away."

"So, he's alive," Maryse murmured.

"What does he want with them?" asked Jace at the same time.

"I cannot say," Magnus answered. "But I can assure you, they are in danger."

Maryse seemed deep in thought. "What does he want?" she asked distractedly.

"The cup," blurted Hodge.

Five heads turned to him questioningly.

"What cup?" Jace was the first to question.

"The mortal cup," Maryse breathed. "It's been missing since Valentine disappeared. He always planned to take it from the Clave but since the failed Uprising and his declared death, it was considered lost."

"But what does that have to do with his wife and daughter?" Isabelle stretched her long legs as she bent against the long reading table next to Jace.

"Jocelyn â€¦ She must have taken it. What was she doing with it?" Maryse concluded, her blue eyes bright with wonder.

"Well, she sure as hell wasn't handing it to Valentine," Magnus said with exasperation. He wasn't sure he liked their line of thinking. It didn't seem that they were at all concerned with what happened to Jocelyn, but more importantly to Magnus, what happened to Clary. He had grown accustomed to Jocelyn after so many years. He knew she had ultimately rejected Valentine's insanity. She had played a pivotal role in crushing the Circle's uprising after years at his side and he had grown to admire her strength and tenacity. He respected her and shared her aversion of the Shadowhunter community. But it was Clary he had grown to love. He had known her as a two year old baby and had seen her mature through the years. Sadly, she knew nothing of him since he only ever met her to temporarily wipe away her shadowhunter vision. Still, each time they "met," she retained a fearlessness and eager curiosity that sometimes terrorized his cat but he found endearing. She was an innocent if ever there was one and he could not stand back and do nothing knowing she was endangered. "Look. You are the angel appointed guardians of this world. It's your duty to find them. Help them. They certainly didn't leave willingly and â€¦ Jocelyn holds the key to the mortal cup. She was clearly keeping it from him. We don't know what he plans to do with it but we all know it's nothing good."

Maryse nodded slowly. Jace looked excited, Isabelle seemed to be examining her boots, wickedly impressive spiked heels with an array of runes denoting power and agility, and Alec ... Alec just stared disconcertingly at Magnus. Magnus noticed what Alec was wearing, a loose fraying gray sweater and black jeans. It was easier to look at that than return his intense scrutiny. It was jolting. It felt as if Alec was looking into his soul and Magnus found himself strangely anxious about what he might see.

"Yes, we must find them," Maryse declared. Her voice strengthened with determination. "I have to contact the Council. They need to know about Valentine. I'll probably have to return to Idris to discuss this in person and make some arrangements for Max. Alec, Jace, Isabelle, you must not try to find Valentine yourselves. Leave this

matter to the adults."

All three seemed to bristle at this statement but only Alec responded, "I'll be eighteen in a few weeks. I'm practically an adult shadowhunter, myself."

"Alec, you know what I mean. Even if you were already eighteen I would not want you to go head to head against Valentine. That man almost destroyed the Clave. He almost destroyed me and your father," her voice broke and she lowered her head.

"Mother," both Alec and Isabelle cried as they reached out to her. Jace also huddled closed to her.

"Hodge, I expect you to watch out for them. Take care of them. Send word immediately if there is any sign of Valentine or Jocelyn and her daughter," Maryse finished with a glance at Magnus.

"I'll take my leave now," Magnus conceded as he turned to the door. To his surprise he felt a warm hand below his elbow.

"I'll walk you out," said Alec.

"Thank you," replied Magnus. "There's something you should know about Jocelyn's daughter," Magnus began as he faced the room full of shadowhunters again. "She does not know she is a shadowhunter. She's been raised as a mundane. That's why her mother engaged my services, to keep that part of her life hidden from her eyes." Magnus could feel their outraged glares but he remained unmoved. "It was a temporary measure. I would not permanently blind her but I had to cast the spell at least every two years to dispel the sight. You will have to be cautious with her. She must know something of what she is by now and I can't imagine how she may be handling it. It's been over two years and three months since the last casting and as she grew older it seemed the weaves wore off quicker."

"You kept the truth from her. You let her mother lie to her." Jace's expression was hard.

"I did what I thought was right. I would not injure her. I understood why her mother wanted to keep her from your world. It's a vicious way to live," Magnus stopped. "You should know her name. It's Cl...", Magnus was interrupted as the large raven flew off Hodge's shoulder and started frantically circling and squawking around them.

"Get that bird out of here, Hodge!" Maryse shouted as Hodge tried to draw the bird away and Jace and Isabelle remained protectively around Maryse.

Magnus left the room and found Alec by his side. They moved through the long corridors without speaking a word.

Alec broke the silence as they walked into the caged elevator, "You care about her. The girl and her mother, I think."

"I do. I've watched her grow up since she was a tiny little thing. She's strong. She would have made a good shadowhunter although I wouldn't wish that fate on anyone," Magnus spoke without thinking. "I'm sorry. I don't mean to offend," he added contritely.

"That's okay," Alec smiled. "I think I understand. But it's not as bad as you think. It's really pretty cool in a lot of ways. Like, I wouldn't have met you if I weren't a shadowhunter."

Magnus returned the smile and found himself genuinely pleased. His heart actually beat faster as Alec drew closer to open the elevator door. They had reached the ground floor.

"Alec, I can honestly say, I've never met a shadowhunter I wanted to see again before you," Magnus flirted and winked as he whimsically added, "Call me."

He was about to turn and head out into the Manhattan night, when Alec reached for him again and said bluntly, "I don't have your number."

Magnus was stunned and against his better judgment peered directly into Alec's sapphire orbs. He saw only an intense sincerity and longing in those eyes and could not pretend it did not affect him. Blue sparks leaped out of his fingertips and a card appeared in his hand. He gently placed the card in Alec's hand. "So now you have it."

Magnus returned Alec's shy smile and then walked into the cool city night feeling a stirring in his heart that he had not felt in a very long time.

6. Chapter 6 Clary's Mission

I think it's picking up now! Clace to come (not yet but soon)! Thanks very much for the reviews, favs and follows. Very encouraging.

Disclaimer: Love TMI, love Cassandra Clare's writing. She owns it all ...

* * *

><p>Clary sat in Valentine's study, anxiously waiting for him and her brother. Apparently he had some big news to reveal and being the drama queen he was, he had to build up the suspense, she smirked to herself. Of course, she would never give voice to her little jokes to herself and suddenly she felt quite sad. She missed Simon terribly. She never had to watch her mouth around Simon. Now she was practically a robot, always stifling some thought or emotion. Everything was careful, careful, watch yourself, measure the response, hold your breath and continue â€|<p>

She found herself spending less and less time with her mother. Not that it was a very productive use of time. Her mother showed no signs of any awareness. She had stopped speaking to her mother during these visits, telling her what she was doing, what she was feeling, her worries and hopes. It seemed pointless and she did not entirely trust that she could speak freely even in front of her senseless mother. It was beginning to feel like Valentine was everywhere and knew everything.

The door at the back of the library swung open revealing both Valentine and his son. Jonathan almost reached his father's height.

It wouldn't be long before he surpassed it. Clary wasn't sure who made the more impressive figure. There was no doubt Valentine commanded a room but Jonathan held a spark in his features that spoke of untold depths and was definitely prettier. His stark white hair had grown and now brushed his broad shoulders. It suited him, she thought. She wondered who had trimmed it before. Both wore the same impassive expressions and strode into the room. She had lately learned that Valentine's office had two doors. The one behind his desk was normally hidden behind heavy drapes but she had spied its existence not long ago after they had returned from Brooklyn. She had sat in this very room with Jonathan standing at her side while Valentine paced back and forth. He had abruptly pushed aside the drapes, opened the mysterious door and left them as he walked down darkened steps. Jonathan had cleared his throat and shook his head with disapproval when Clary had stood up, ready to investigate this doorway, and led her back to her own room when it became apparent Valentine would not be returning any time soon.

Valentine took his customary position, seated behind his desk facing Clary. Jonathan stood behind her.

"I'm sending you and your brother back to New York. You will find the other Jonathan and uncover the meaning of the vision your rune revealed." Valentine instructed.

Clary waited. Valentine would let her know when she was permitted to speak.

"There are things you should know about the time your mother and you lived apart from us," Valentine continued. He leaned back into his chair. "The other Jonathan, I raised him as my own child. He believes he is my son. As I've already told you, there are many lies spread by the Clave about the Uprising and the Circle that I led. But even before the Uprising, the Council was surreptitiously taking steps to weaken our group. I had a lieutenant, my right hand and trusted friend. He was murdered by the Council. Hunted down and slaughtered in an effort to impair my plans. I will admit they succeeded at that but they only delayed its eventual conclusion. Now, with you and Jonathan at my side," Valentine smiled, "we cannot be stopped."

"I digress," Valentine noted as Clary sat still in her seat. "My lieutenant, his name was Stephen. Stephen Herondale. He was truly a prodigious example of the Nephilim. His wife was about to give birth any day when we learned Stephen was killed. She did not have the will to live after he died. She was able to bare their son but she passed immediately after. I promised to care for the orphan as my own. She begged me to keep him hidden from the Clave. She was convinced they would exact some harsh fate on the child of the man they unlawfully executed. I could not refuse. It was the least I could do for the poor child and for Stephen, a loyal and faithful soldier who stayed true to our cause to the very end." Valentine shook his head sorrowfully. "It was after the doomed uprising that I assumed the identity of another shadowhunter, Michael Wayland, who had perished with his young son. They were killed by a pack of werewolves roaming wild with bloodlust. We lived hidden away in the Wayland Manor, this very manor where we now reside. The child and I lived here for a decade until I learned your mother still lived, that she had fled to America. I could not take him with your brother and me as we searched for her. He did not know that he was not my son by birth. He did not even know of your brother. I had to keep him ignorant for his own

safety. So, I faked my death as Michael Wayland. The Lightwoods head the Clave's New York Institute and Robert Lightwood was parabatai to Michael. I knew they would take in Michael Wayland's desolute child. He would be safe there, away from Idris, secure in the belief that he was Michael Wayland's offspring. His name is Jonathan. He is the "other" Jonathan. He will lead us to the cup." Valentine's black eyes drew in. They seemed to drift into the past. There was a tenderness in his face that Clary only witnessed when he sat with her mother. He cared for this other Jonathan.

"How will we approach him father?" asked Clary. She could feel Jonathan stir behind her.

"Your brother will take the guise of Sebastian Verlac, a shadowhunter from the Paris Institute. We have made the necessary arrangements so that they are expecting his visit at the NY Institute. You will join him as a friend that Sebastian met during an earlier excursion at the Miami Institute. You've formed a close bond and plan to become parabatai." Valentine had his elbows on his desk, his fingers steepled before him, "They will not question your unexpected arrival if you two are working towards forming a parabatai. I have it on good information that the Lightwoods are not acquainted with the Wingspears who head the Miami Institute and it is large enough that an unknown shadowhunter could believably emerge from its premises. You will befriend the other Jonathan. Make him trust you. Find out if he knows anything about the mortal cup. Somehow he will lead us to it," Valentine finished.

He looked coolly down at Clary. Then his eyes shifted up and took on a severe aspect as he stared at her brother. "I do not want him harmed. He has his own gifts and he will join us eventually. He is practically your brother, an adopted brother."

"Father, may I speak," she finally voiced.

"Yes." His cold expression told her he would not brook any argument.

"I'm concerned," Clary began. "I've never been to Miami. I've never actually squared off with a demon. I mean, I'm fairly expert at practicing in the training room but I don't think it's the same thing and most importantly I don't know how to pretend to be someone I'm not." She was afraid her voice sounded plaintive.

Valentine's smile made his face even colder. "You will be properly trained. I will not allow your inexperience to ruin our plans. You and Jonathan will first travel to Miami. Stay there for a month. Let's call it a demon hunting expedition. You two will learn to fight side by side. I myself will make sure you can play the role required of you. It is an exacting science in its own way. The key is to make yourself believe the lies. I have no doubt you will excel at this, just as you have proven your abilities in so many other ways." Valentine's eyes narrowed until they were black slits. Clary felt a chill run up and down her body and then felt a firm warm hand at the base of her neck. She turned her face up to see her brother. His eyes seemed consumed by a black fire. There was something seething in his thoughts that she felt sure he kept concealed from their father. She watched as his eyes turned vacant, his face completely expressionless as he lifted his head at this Valentine.

"Very well, father," murmured Jonathan obediently.

Clary cringed at the idea of spending more time under Valentine's tutelage but felt an eager tingle anticipating a true battle against demons, fulfilling her place as a legitimate Nephilim and meeting other shadowhunters her own age.

7. Chapter 7 Brooklyn Calling

****Hello! I would have posted yesterday but forgot to bring my laptop home. Argh! Not sure I can keep up with daily updates but getting to some good stuff now - at least I'm really enjoying writing it. Hope you enjoy reading it.****

****Disclaimer: Cassandra Clare owns TMI and all of the wonderful characters.****

* * *

><p>"Jace," Alec was leaning against a bare white wall, his voice clearly exasperated. "Can we leave now? We promised Mom not to meddle around."<p>

"Did you promise that?" Jace asked mildly. He was crouched down, examining a seemingly innocuous dent in the wall on the other side of the room. "I don't remember promising anything myself. Would be a real shame to lose your company." Jace turned to face Alec with a lopsided smirk on his face. "You never know what kind of trouble I could get into without you to watch out for me."

Alec sighed heavily, "Listen, Jace. We've been back at this apartment five times already. How many times do you have to look at an empty room to get the picture? There's nothing here."

"Really?" Jace was now staring up at the ceiling. "I didn't think you'd mind an occasional trip to Brooklyn. It's one of the finest outer boroughs of New York City and I got the impression you were really finding a lot to appreciate about the place."

"Shut up," Alec folded his arms but grinned good-naturedly. "I'm going to be late meeting up with Magnus." Only Izzy and Jace knew about him and Magnus and that suited Alec just fine. He could only imagine his parents' horror when they found out their oldest son was gay and dating a warlock. At first Alec was terrified of Jace's reaction. He had harbored a crush on Jace for a while but somehow Jace had just guessed that Alec was seeing Magnus. Well, it might have something to do with all the glitter that started to appear on his clothes, his hair, random body parts. It had been the most natural thing in the world. Jace was his parabatai and now that he had Magnus he could clearly see that he had never been in love with Jace. Jace was family, the best kind of family. Someone who loved and accepted him wholeheartedly. Alec was not so certain he could say the same about his parents and he felt a twinge of guilt that he was actually glad his mother and father had gotten tied up in Idris.

"Anyway, Maryse hardly knew she wouldn't be returning anytime soon," Jace broke into Alec's thoughts. He was now walking around the room, his head darting back and forth as if there was something to

see.

Hodge had received word from Idris. It seemed the Council did not put much credence behind the words of a warlock. But, the Clave was worried. It would soon be time for the Accords to be renewed and while they did not accept Valentine Morgenstern was a living threat they believed there were still active members of the destructive Circle who would try to destroy the Shadowhunters' peace treaty with Downworlders. Although Maryse and Robert had been punished and ostensibly forgiven for their participation in the Circle, they were not fully trusted and the Council would not allow them to return to New York until the Accords were peacefully accomplished. They were kept under strict surveillance with the excuse that as former members of the Circle, their knowledge of any missing and unaccounted for deviant shadowhunters was invaluable to the Council.

"Go on, then," Jace returned Alec's smile. "Tell Magnus I said hi."

"Are you sure?" Alec asked sincerely.

"I think I can find my way back home," Jace drawled.

"Jace, what do you think you'll find? Why are you so *pré* preoccupied with this?" Alec worried. "I mean, yeah, they're shadowhunters but we both know shadowhunters die, all the time, and it's not like we knew them or even like the Council cares *pré*"

"Yeah, I know," Jace dismissed. "I just can't get them out of my head. I just feel like this," Jace waved his arms up, "is huge. I can't shake it. I know it means something." He shook his head. "But you're right. I'm not getting anywhere wandering around an empty apartment. I'll leave in a few minutes. I promise. I'll see you back at the Institute."

"OK, Jace," Alec replied. "Promise me, no demon hunting without me."

Jace rolled his eyes, "Yes, Dad. I promise. Go on, get outta here."

Alec looked worried but hurried off, eager to see Magnus. Jace was happy for him. Alec seemed so much more comfortable in his own skin since he met Magnus and Alec deserved to be happy.

Jace took another turn through the apartment. He walked into a small room with a window facing the tree lined street below. It was a quiet block. It had begun to rain a bit and the black asphalt shined with the reflection of the streetlights. Every now and then a car would pass, spraying up the puddled water at the corners. He'd been haunted by a recurring dream lately. There was a girl. Even through the dream's opaqueness, her hair was a bright red. She was waiting for him. He walked over to her. Her shining green eyes reminded him of the dewy morning fields surrounding the estate from his childhood home in Idris.

"Where have you been?" she whispered. She held out a hand and he took it into his own. Her hand was small, warm and strong. It felt *pré* perfect.

"I'm here. I've always been here," he answered.

She quivered. "It's too late. I'm sorry." She reached up on her toes, she was very small, and kissed him gently on the cheek.

And then he woke up.

Jace wasn't sure why the dream bubbled up in his thoughts now but somehow he could clearly imagine her red head below his, peering through this very window, seeing the world as he saw it.

He realized he had remained in the apartment longer than he had planned. He was about to turn away from the window when he recognized an Eidolon demon standing across the street, waiting for someone or something as it moved its head back and forth viewing one end of the block to the other. It had taken on a human form, a non-descript middle aged man, brown hair, black trench coat, wire frames. Jace stepped away from the window and pulled a seraph blade from his belt. He knew the runes he and Alec had drawn on before they left the Institute were still good. He could feel their strength and energy course through his veins. Not that he needed them to take care of an Eidolon demon but it was an ingrained habit to check his weapons, runes, gear. He had promised Alec no demon hunting without him but really what could he do? The thing was practically on top of him. It was hardly as if he were actually hunting demons when they just appeared in front of him. Jace welcomed the surge of adrenaline as he rushed down the stairs. His hand was on the knob to the building's front door when the door to the lower apartment in the brownstone building cracked open and an old woman peered out of its entrance. She wore a yellow and orange tropically themed turban and matching caftan along with a pair of large gold and blue beaded hoop earrings. He knew she was Madam Dorothea, Seer and Prophetess, as advertised by a placard in her front window. He had already checked her out; completely human, dabbled a bit with the magical and arcane within her limited abilities. No threat and nothing of interest for him to investigate. He was about to turn away and get back to some demon slaying when the old woman called out.

"Jace Wayland. I know what you are. You're searching for them," she glanced up to indicate the last occupants of the apartment above her head. "There's someone you should meet. He's searching for them too â€| Damn near frantic about it," she harrumphed.

"You can see me," he said with surprise, "and how do you know my name?"

"I'm an old lady. I've been around," she cackled. "Come by tomorrow. I need to get my beauty rest now. But first, take care of that garbage out there." She shut the door.

* * *

><p>Jace swung open the heavy front door and leapt out onto the darkened street. He landed only a few feet away from the demon but plenty close enough to reach it with his seraph blade.<p>

"Jehoel," he sang out and the sudden burst of light seemed to blind the demon.

It backed up quickly and hissed, its disguise dissolving as its true

form revealed itself. It was tall and charcoal black, sharpened horns at the top of its head, long talons protruding out of its stick like fingers, rectangular pupils in its eyes and goat-like legs, complete with hooves loudly clapping on the sidewalk.

"Nephilim," it bellowed, "I've been waiting for your kind." It smiled showing off a wide set of sharp little knives for teeth.

Jace was a blur of motion as he whirled forward and jammed the blade deep into its chest then pulled it out. The Eidolon evidently had not expected his bewildering speed. The stunned expression on its face was vaguely amusing as the demon buckled into itself then blinked out of the world.

"Well, that was just stupid," Jace muttered to himself. "I should have questioned it first but that one was just asking for it, cocky bastard." Jace felt the swish of air behind him before he heard a sound and immediately threw himself forward landing in a tumble, facing the opposite direction.

A trio of Golumon demons slithered before him. This would explain the Eidolon's cockiness, thought Jace. They were notoriously difficult to kill. Their fluid, slime covered bodies were poisonous and would quickly paralyze its victim at the slightest contact. They were also extremely rare. Jace had never seen one in person before, only ever reading about the Golumon in one of the ancient archives. At least his studies taught him where to strike. Izzy and Alec would have to appreciate his dedication to the old texts now, he thought gloatingly. That is, if I survive this, he amended flippantly. A small spot at the center of its disgustingly gelatinous head served as its "brain" and that was where he had to strike. He unerringly threw the seraph blade, slightly weighed down with the Eidolon's black ichor, at the monster in the middle while back-flipping to keep them at a distance. The beast roared a thick sludgy sound, collapsed, then disappeared in a fog of thick gray smoke. The remaining Golumon demons spread apart oozing a brackish brown trail. Tentacles emerged from their bulbous trembling bodies. Unlike the rest of its sluggish form, the tentacles whipped out in swift, long strides. The poison seemed to be concentrated in these feelers as they left sizzling black marks on anything they touched. Jace pulled out two daggers. He was barely visible as he vaulted all around the Golumon, away from their darting limbs. The daggers flew out at the beasts while Jace was spinning. One found its target and the demon disintegrated like the first. The other dagger connected thickly with an outstretched tentacle blocking the path to its intended point. Jace halted his dizzying shadowhunter gymnastics already reaching for another throwing knife when the last Golumon incongruously propelled its shuddering mass up in the air. Now that's something I didn't read in the book, thought Jace, just as a glowing seraph blade shot down from above and landed squarely in the beast's head. The monster impressively shattered into dust while it was still midair.

He held the knife firmly in his grip as he quickly surveyed his surroundings.

"Hiya," called out a jaunty voice from above. Then a flash of red and black suddenly jumped down from a streetlight over two stories tall. She shook her hair. Long, wild, flame colored curls spanned out on her shoulders. She stood up from her crouched pose on the ground, one hand expertly holding out a shortsword.

"Damn, broke my hair tie," she huffed. She stood straight and slid the sword smoothly into a scabbard hooked onto her belt. She was small, just skimming five feet but she was not a child. Her movements flowed like silk and she had the hard, lean muscles of a well-trained shadowhunter. The black leather gear fit snugly against her body.

In an evening of surprises, she was the biggest shock of all.

Her emerald green eyes took him in clinically. "You look OK. Did you get stung?" she asked.

8. Chapter 8 When Jace Met Clary

"I am good," Jace answered dragging his eyes from her face. It was her, the girl from his dream.

"Well, that's a relief. Really hate to lose a seraph blade _and_ break a hair tie without a proper pat on the back for saving the day," she smiled at him. "Although," she paused, "I'm getting the distinct impression I'll just be giving myself that pat."

Jace looked down at her again and a chuckle escaped his lips, somehow merging with the surprise on his face.

She moved closer to him and he felt his breathing hitch. Leaning in and bouncing up on her toes she pushed his mouth closed with two fingers under his chin.

"Wouldn't want you catching any flies in that pretty mouth of yours," she grinned.

"So, have we met before?" Jace realized that sounded dumb as soon as he said it but there was no taking it back. He relaxed, noticing he was still holding the throwing knife and slipped it back into his weapons belt.

"Oh, I don't think so," she replied smoothly. "I'm fairly certain I wouldn't forget _you_. I'm Seraphina Fairborn," she held out a hand.

He took it slowly almost fearful that it would fall short of the bond he felt in the dream. It felt even better. An electric current charged up his arm. "Jace Wayland."

"Jace am hm," she deliberated, "I like it. What are you doing here?" she asked curiously. She turned to face the brownstone Jace had just left.

"I'm investigating," he answered, "a disappearance am Shadowhunters."

"Really," she said slowly. "Sounds am interesting."

"So, what are _you_ doing here?" he questioned and realized he still held her hand. He knew he should let go but he didn't want to and she didn't seem to mind.

"Oh, I'm just visiting the Manhattan Institute and I thought I'd take

a grand tour of New York City when I picked up a reading," she pointed at a sensor secured against her chest. "It was off the hook," she whistled. "How'd a nice guy like you pick up three hellraisers like that?" She subtly pulled her hand back to gather and twist her hair back from her face.

"Demons don't find me so nice," he answered steadily. "I don't know where they came from." He lifted his own hand to the back of his neck. "Gotta figure it's connected to the disappearance," he mused. "Wait a minute. How long were you watching me fight off those Golumon?"

"Not long." Her green eyes sparkled playfully. "I was enjoying the show for a minute or two there. You may be faster than lightning," she noted appreciatively.

"I could have died," Jace stared at her wonderingly.

"No, you wouldn't. I would not have let that happen," she replied confidently.

They stood there eyeing each other silently until a slow grin emerged on Jace's face. "You know, I think we're going to get along fabulously."

"Hey," he continued, "I live at the New York Institute. Allow me to escort you, my fair lady," he said with a flourish and pulled out his elbow beckoning her touch.

"Very gallant, good sir," she giggled. "I would be delighted."

* * *

><p>Getting back to the Manhattan Institute had been a blast. Being a shadowhunter with Jace was amazingly fun. They had raced around the city rooftops, daring each other to impossible leaps and bounds with the ever burning skyscraper lights as their backdrop. They dashed along the waterfront iron railings up the West Side, lay back on the grassy knolls of Central Park gazing up at the clear night skies with the occasional sprites and pixies prancing around them and vaulted up on top of the MTA transit buses that operated all night and day, enjoying the moving view as they rode through the still busy streets. At some point they joined hands again as they ran together shrieking like little children. A full moon was out, high in the sky, by the time they got to the Institute.<p>

"We haven't really had a chance to talk," Jace panted lightly, catching his breath. "I don't know anything about you." His eyes were bright and feverish, a smile still splayed on his lips.

"Oh, what's there to know," she said blithely, "I'm just your ordinary shadowhunter gal, passing by, shooting the breeze with the resident shadowhunter hunk," she winked.

Jace's face fell a bit at this response and eased into a knowing smirk. "Is that all I am? A pretty face? Be still my beating heart. You wound me, Sera."

She grabbed him then and hugged him tightly around the waist. "Thank you, Jace. It's been so long since I've just been happy and free. You

don't know what it means to me." She moved her hands up his shoulders to stretch up and smother his face with wet kisses.

"Stop that, you crazy thing," he laughed but kept his own arms tight around her tiny waist, lifting her up to his chest. He breathed in the floral scent of her hair, musky from the exhaust fumes on the city streets, salty air of the Hudson River and sweet grass from the lawns in Central Park. He couldn't imagine anything smelling better.

She pulled back then and he could feel her closing off from him while her smile remained congenial. Her eyes drifted behind him, "Sebastian, there you are! You must meet Jace. He's wonderful."

Jace turned slowly, gently lowering Sera back down to the ground but kept one arm loosely around her waist. Sebastian appeared to be about his own age and height, black hair, black eyes set against a ghostly white face. They had a similar build although Jace was slightly more filled out but Sebastian had an undeniably formidable look about him.

Sebastian nodded, an amiable smile appeared on his face. "Hi, Jace. I'm Sebastian Verlac. Isabelle's been telling me all about you."

"And Alec too!" squealed Izzy as she walked up behind him. She noticed Sera then, standing next to Jace, their arms still entwined around each other. "You must be Seraphina. I see you've already met Jace, of course," Izzy's voice lowered to a normal tone.

Sera moved away from Jace, walking over to Izzy to introduce herself.

Jace kept his eyes on Sebastian who watched Jace just as intently.

"You were expecting me, right?" asked Sebastian. "My aunt Elodie sent word I'd be making this trip to New York."

"Yeah, I remember Hodge mentioning it," Jace returned. "So you and Sera came together? I don't think Hodge said anything about her."

"That was unexpected," Sebastian agreed. "We met while I was at the Miami Institute. Really lovely place. But too much sun. It's no good for my fair complexion. We're thinking about becoming parabatai, me and Seraphina. Although sometimes, I'm not sure it would work," he continued in a low and confidential voice. Sebastian advanced toward Jace, stopping only a foot away from him. "Seraphina and I are complete together. We'd make the perfect parabatai but," he whispered, "it wouldn't be right." He finished, his look challenging Jace to question why not.

Jace shrugged, "Well, good luck with that." He was about to leave and head into his own chambers when he spun around, "Hey, how long are you guys staying?"

"I'm not sure," Sebastian answered. "Didn't really set a timetable. Anxious to get rid of us, already?" he simpered.

"Not at all," Jace responded with his own award winning simper. "Sera expressed some interest in an investigation I'm working on. I thought she might want to help me with it."

Sera seemed to catch this part of the conversation as she joined them.

"I'd like that, Jace. Thanks for thinking of it," she said excitedly. "There's something I've been working on that I think you'll find interesting too. Maybe we can try it tomorrow?" She casually gave Jace a quick hug and peck on the cheek. "Good night."

Jace watched her leave as Sebastian slung a proprietary arm around her shoulder and walked with her to the visitors' annex.

"She's very pretty," Izzy interrupted a bit sullenly, "and so small."

"Beautiful," Jace breathed unthinkingly.

"I don't know if I should do a jig or keel over," Izzy looked over at him incredulously.

"What are you talking about?" he asked, a sulky frown on his face.

"You know what I'm talking about. I never thought I'd say this to you, but you've got it bad and it ain't good," she smirked.

"You are out of your mind. I've got to hit the sack," Jace's hand shot out and mussed up her hair the way he knew she hated, then darted away to his room.

9. Chapter 9 To Love Is To Destroy

Thanks to those who have reviewed, fav'd and followed. Motivates me to keep writing.

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* * *

><p>Clary and Jace sat companionably on a blue and white checkered blanket that seemed to mirror the clear blue sky and the fluffy white clouds above their heads. They were back at Central Park, in a glamour warded area safe from mundane intrusions, and digging into the takeout that Jace had picked up from Taki's. They were both dressed casually in shirts and jeans but were well equipped with at least six or eight blades, daggers and knives hidden in the various pockets, sheaths and belts in their loose jackets and fastened along their bodies. Clary was decked in different shades of blue. A royal blue blouse lit the brilliant red curls that she had pinned neatly to the sides of her head, letting them cascade down her back and turned her eyes a glassy sea-green. Her jeans were a well-worn faded blue. Jace paired black jeans with a long sleeved white t-shirt. Clary could see the muted imprint of the permanent runes on his chest and neck through the shirt and thought they made him even more hopelessly beautiful.<p>

It was a lovely, crisp spring day and Jace suggested they get something to eat outdoors. Jonathan had already made plans to visit some Downworlder hubs with Izzy, get to know the relevant shadowhunter places in the city, and they both knew it was her mission to draw in Jace. Although Jonathan was strangely reluctant to leave her alone with him, repeatedly asking her if she wanted him to come along or perhaps they could all trek through the city together?

"Relax," Clary had told him rubbing the side of his bicep. It was then that Clary realized how tense Jonathan really was when the muscles on his arm remained stiff.

"I don't trust him," Jonathan said, a deep scowl on his face. "He can't wait to get his hands on you."

Clary had laughed, "Don't be ridiculous, Sebastian." They had both agreed to only address each other with their fabricated names while they stayed at the New York Institute. "Jace doesn't see me that way," Clary added. She didn't mention that she wished he did, that since the moment they met she felt like herself again, that it hurt to lie to him. Clary wanted to tell Jace the truth. But this was the only way to keep him safe, wasn't it? If everyone knew who he really was, who knew what the Clave would do to him? Clary wondered why they couldn't just tell him the truth but Valentine had been very clear that she was not to say a word to him about it and no matter what she thought or felt about Valentine she knew he cared for Jace and wanted to protect him.

"So are you ready for some dessert?" Jace asked, his golden eyes opened wide, his smile completely infectious.

"Bring it," she whooped opening her hands.

Jace brought out a small cardboard box tied with a pink ribbon and pulled out two vanilla cupcakes with ivory colored icing decorated with red candy hearts.

"Ooooooh," Clary gushed, "looks good. Seb won't let me have sweets too often. Says it's counter-productive to training," she imitated in a stern voice.

"I don't know how you put up with him," Jace grimaced. He placed one cupcake delicately in her outstretched hand and tucked into his own.

"He's not so bad," Clary defended. "He's an amazing fighter. I've seen him take on five Raveners and a pair of Denizens on his own."

"Yeah, yeah, he's awesome," Jace muttered, "But he couldn't possibly be better than me, could he?" Jace lifted an eyebrow questioningly.

"Well, I wouldn't know," Clary conceded. "You're both incredibly marvelous he-men." She laughed again. It was easy to laugh around Jace. She finished her cupcake and looked up at Jace who watched her mirthfully.

"You've got icing all over your face," he pointed out.

"Well, give me a napkin." She leaned over to where he sat.

"What, and waste all that delectable buttercream frosting?" he asked her with mock horror.

"What do you suggest? Should I just leave it on my face all day?" she screwed up her nose.

"Come here, I've got this," he said readily, pulling her close and proceeded to lick her scrupulously around her face.

"Jace, this is gross," she said eyeing his pink tongue as it skimmed the corner of her mouth.

"I think it's delicious," Jace replied, his golden eyes hooded by the long sweep of his caramel lashes.

"Do you do this kind of thing with all the girls?" Clary gulped. She was worried she might start hyperventilating and decided the best way to handle the situation was to try her best to pretend this was perfectly normal behavior between two people who had just met a day ago. "Well, thanks for that," she said airily, "now I really need to wash my face."

Jace looked at her like he hadn't heard a thing she said.

Their faces were inches away and she could see her own molten gold reflection in his bronze flecked eyes. Clary was fairly certain Pygmalion could not have carved a more perfect creature, his face a contour of sharp planes and edges. His skin seemed to glow, absorbing the rays of the sun. She lowered her eyes in an attempt to control the spiraling sensation in her head and realized her error when her gaze dropped down to his mouth. A slight chip on one of his incisors may have been the only flaw on his face but it only made him more real and more irresistible to her.

Oh screw it, thought Clary. I may never have a chance like this again. She closed her eyes and fell on his lips. She thought it might help clear her mind but of course it did exactly the opposite. What had started as a soft graze quickly escalated into a heated embrace, their lips parting, hungrily devouring each other. She gasped as she felt his tongue brush her teeth and then collide with her own tongue. He tasted like sweet vanilla and smelled like lemons and sunshine. Somehow she found herself lying back, her head resting on his forearm, his elbows leaning against the blanket holding the weight of his body off hers. She couldn't get close enough to him. Her hands ran through the silken threads of his golden hair and then moved down to slide below his shirt. His body tensed and he moaned into her mouth. Her fingers felt the faint traces of innumerable runes as she alternately grasped then glided her hands along his firm toned back.

The sound of a quick gasp brought Clary crashing back down to reality and she immediately unlocked her lips from his to look towards the source of the sound. Izzy stood at the edge of the clearing a few yards away and Jonathan reached her just as Clary rolled out from under Jace. She sat up on her knees and attempted a welcoming smile, knowing full well her hair was likely a wild mess and there would be no way to hide her bruised lips. Still, she would try to play it off

like nothing happened. She knew Jonathan would not be pleased but she was not prepared for the blank fury in his eyes when she calmly faced him.

"Hi guys," she managed a bit weakly, "What are you doing here?" She pulled down at her blouse and patted the back of her hair.

Izzy lowered her hand from her mouth uncovering a small grin. "Sebastian wanted to catch up with you two. He's like a momma bear, couldn't stop worrying about you." She turned to Jonathan, "See, they're fine. Jace wouldn't let anything happen to her. I told you we should just leave them alone."

Clary swung around to see how Jace was faring. He was still draped on top of the blanket positioned above it as if she were still under him. His face lifted up at the three of them, his expression slightly dazed. Looking at his tousled hair, throbbing and plump pink lips and his shirt halfway up his torso, she stifled an internal groan. He slowly propped himself up and lazily unrolled his shirt back down to his waist. Clary thought she detected some frustration when he glanced at her but it seemed to clear off his face as he stretched out his legs in front of him and leaned back on his arms held out behind him.

"Seraphina," Jonathan said coldly, "Come with me. We should get back to the Institute. I need to talk with you." He held out a hand summoning her.

Clary momentarily sat back to stand up when she felt Jace's hand around her arm.

"You don't have to go," Jace spoke longingly. "I thought there was something you were going to show me. I thought we'd spend the day together."

"There's plenty of time, Jace," she smiled at him, immeasurably touched that he wanted her to stay with him. She worried she cared too much.

"Is there?" he asked, his voice falling.

"Seraphina, I'm waiting." Jonathan stood tall, glowering at them both.

Clary gently brushed some wayward locks off Jace's face, "Of course there is," she answered softly then got up and walked to Jonathan.

* * *

><p>"What do you think you're doing?" hissed Jonathan. They were back at the Institute. He had practically dragged her into her assigned quarters and turned on her as soon as he shut the door.<p>

"What I'm supposed to be doing. Or did you forget, I'm supposed to get him to like me, trust me," she answered petulantly. She did not like the way Jonathan was acting. It reminded her too much of Valentine. She wished Jonathan would go back to his usual self, comforting, supportive and protective. She had always felt safe although slightly uncomfortable in his presence before. That seemed to have changed since they met Jace.

"Your assignment was to find the mortal cup," Jonathan jeered. "Did you think you'd find it down his throat or maybe down his pants?" Jonathan looked ill. Clary thought this may be the first time she did not find him beautiful.

"How dare you," she answered contemptibly. "We just met. I like him. A lot. But I would never, I mean I'm a virgin, I wouldn't just sleep with someone I didn't love."

Jonathan swallowed and visibly settled down. "OK. I'm sorry. I shouldn't have said that." He walked over and placed his hands firmly on each of her arms. "I care about you. I'm worried about you. I told you he's a player. He'll break your heart."

"No, he won't," Clary responded dully. "To love is to destroy and to be loved is to be destroyed. Isn't that right, brother? I can't afford to love anyone else."

Jonathan hugged her then and bent his head low to whisper in her ear, "You can love me. We couldn't hurt each other. You and I are one."

Clary pushed him away, "Jonathan, get out. I want to be alone." She was sick of him. Sick of pretending to be someone else and sick of the strange stomach churning way he made her feel when he spoke of their connection.

"Do not call me that," Jonathan said in a low and resentful voice. "Don't ever let yourself slip like that. I'm Sebastian. Only Sebastian, here."

He walked away then and left the room.

Clary dropped down onto the bed. It was much more comfortable than her hard mattress in Idris. She felt like she was on a crazy emotional rollercoaster. One moment flying so fast and high, feeling so much heart pounding joy with Jace, and then the next moment falling forcefully to the ground, knowing it was all a lie. At least when she was just with Valentine and Jonathan she didn't know you could be a shadowhunter and intoxicatingly happy.

There was some loose note paper by a writing desk. She sat down and started to sketch. It had been a long time since she had the luxury and it was nice to just let herself get lost in her pictures.

A knock at her door brought her head up. It was late judging by the dimmed light and shadows filtering through the window. She hoped it wasn't Jonathan and she knew she wasn't ready to see Jace again. She wondered who it would be as she haltingly walked to the door and opened it.

This must be Alec, she thought, looking up at another tall shadowhunter with black hair and elegant features like Izzy but midnight blue eyes.

"Hi, I thought I'd meet the visitors," Alec smiled shyly. "I'm Alec. Izzy told me where you and your parabatai-to-be were staying."

"It's nice to meet you, Alec," Clary smiled back at him.

"I'm sorry we haven't met earlier," he apologized. "I've been sort of busy â€¦ personal stuff."

"Oh, am I sensing a significant other?" Clary nudged. "Don't worry, I'm not the prying sort," she continued when she saw an alarmed look in Alec's eyes. "I'm easy to talk to, if you want to that is," she concluded.

Alec looked at her warily. "Well, OK. Thanks." He was about to turn away when a thought occurred to him, "Hey, Seraphina, would you like a tour of the Institute? It doesn't seem like you've gotten a good look around the place yet."

"Sure, Alec. That sounds nice." Clary left her room, shut the door and took Alec's arm as they walked down the hallway. Taking a sideways glance at Alec, she noticed the way his dark hair fell over his eyes and the slight slouch in his movements. She felt a sorrowful pang in her gut. She missed Simon.

10. Chapter 10 Upside Down

Clary sat by herself in the greenhouse atrium housed atop the Manhattan Institute. It was stunning here and so peaceful. The greenery transported her back to the grounds around the Manor house in Idris. Since she had joined Valentine and Jonathan, she had only ever felt truly tranquil when she walked around the gardens, enjoying its natural beauty. The night sky above her shined with dotted stars. She imagined what life would be like living at this Institute, having the large cathedral to explore and this greenhouse to come up to when she needed time by herself. She had been enchanted as soon as Alec brought her up here but he was not so comfortable. He started sneezing shortly after introducing her to the atrium and begged off the rest of the tour unless she was willing to retreat from the greenhouse. She told him she would be fine by herself and now wished she had brought some paper and a pencil to draw some of the plants flush with life surrounding her.

Alec was parabatai with Jace. At first she thought them an odd pairing but later recognized that they suited each other. Alec's quiet solicitude matched Jace's overpowering heroics. She could tell they loved each other from the way they spoke about one another. Another sharp pang hit her. She knew she did not have this deep intrinsic understanding with Jonathan. She also knew who did match her this way. Simon. Where was he? Was he OK? Was he looking for her? She knew if their roles were reversed she could not stop looking for him and was overwhelmed by the need to see him and make sure he was alright.

She heard the entrance to the greenhouse open and the sound of footsteps making its way up the rounded steel staircase that would lead directly to where she sat next to a lustrous white flower that seemed to pulse in its tight bud. She thought about skipping away before the intruder could discover her but she was too late. She turned her eyes up and was confronted by a pair of gold eyes, darkened to an amber shade at this late hour. Jace. He looked surprised to see her there. She hoped she was not an unwelcome sight.

"Jace" she said in a hushed voice and stretched her hand out hoping for his touch but fearing he might reject her, she shut her eyes. She opened them and breathed out in relief when she felt his strong hand clasp her own. "I'm sorry about before," she whispered. "I didn't want to leave. You have to know that."

"I didn't. But I'm glad you told me," he said with an uncertain smile on his face. He had knelt down before her and she could peer deep into his eyes. She had heard eyes are the windows to your soul and if that was true she knew Jace had the truest, purest, most authentic soul in the world. She drew in a sharp breath and at that moment she knew she loved him. She lifted her other hand and caressed his cheek. "Jace, if I never get a chance to say this, I'll regret it forever," she swallowed hard and forced the words out of her mouth, "I know we only just met, but I can't help feeling like I was meant to know you. You've made me so glad to be alive. I would love you to eternity if I could."

Jace looked completely astounded but at least he didn't pull back. He only gripped her hand tighter and his plush lips fell open.

"Don't say anything," Clary continued as she saw him floundering. "I don't need to hear you say it back to me. I just want you to know how I feel." She got up then, bent down and gave him a kiss on the top of his head. She was ready to leave now. She could go back to Valentine, face him and tell him she failed her mission. She tried to pull away but Jace held onto her hand tightly.

"Sera, I don't know how to be â€¦," he seemed confounded, unable to explain himself.

"Jace, don't call me that. Don't call me Sera," she answered, "I'm Clary. Please don't ask me what that means." She wanted to run away then before he asked anymore questions. Telling Jace the truth of her heart had eased the terrible war inside her but she knew she could not stay, not without endangering them all to Valentine's wrath â€¦ but he wouldn't let her go.

Jace opened and closed his mouth, struggling to find a way to voice his questions and comply with her request. Clary grew more confused with each passing moment. By this time, Jace had not only clamped her hand with his but also locked her to him, his other arm an inescapable vise around her waist. She should not have told him her name. She knew Jonathan would lose his mind let alone Valentine.

"Clary â€¦ I like it. It suits you better than Seraphina," he finally spoke.

"Jace, I have to go. I can't stay here anymore," she looked at him, her eyes glistening with tears.

"What do you mean? The atrium? We can go downstairs," he answered. A line formed between his eyebrows. He looked totally confused but otherwise seemed enveloped by an aura of complete contentment.

"No, Jace. I can't be here anymore. It's not safe for you. Joâ€¦ They won't let us be together and I can't lie to you. It's tearing me apart," she struggled to get out of his arms, beating his shoulders with her fists.

"You want to leave me?" he asked in utter shock. "You just said you loved me I can't let you go." He looked at her fervently, worshipping her. "I'll protect you. I don't care about anything but you." Jace stood up but he didn't loosen his hold on her. If anything, he held tighter. "You've turned everything upside down. I don't know how it happened. I know it makes no sense but my soul belonged to you the second I saw you." He crushed her body so closely against his they were practically inhabiting the same space. One of his hands weaved into her hair, pulled her head back tenderly yet firmly and then kissed her.

All her fears and worries vanished from her thoughts as their lips molded into each other. There was nothing else in the world but him. Her arms automatically moved away from his chest, where she placed them when she had attempted to hold him back, and stretched up around his neck. She was off the floor. He had lifted her against a ledge, their faces now positioned at an even level. She opened her legs and wrapped them around his waist to draw him closer. Their hands were everywhere but it wasn't enough.

Suddenly there was a loud racket as the greenhouse door slammed open below them. They did not break their kiss or release their hold but stopped moving their heaving bodies into each other.

"Jace! Jace! You up there?!"

They both opened their eyes then as Alec's footsteps clanged up the iron stairway. They managed to pull their mouths off each other but were still staring at each other, their noses touching. Clary was barely able to comprehend anything but Jace in her arms when Alec found them.

"Jace! I've been call" Alec abruptly stopped as he realized Jace was not alone and his body was fully entangled in another set of limbs not his own. Alec looked away but did not turn around and leave. "I'm really sorry guys but there's an emergency. We need to get downtown. The werewolf pack have gone nuts."

The old Clary would definitely be blushing a fire engine red but she had changed since her introduction to the shadowhunter world. In some ways, she was irreversibly transformed. She unwrapped her legs from Jace's waist and peeled herself off him. He had an expression on his face as if it physically hurt him to remove himself from her. That was slightly gratifying but her own body trembled wanting him back on her, his hands and mouth all over her.

I guess Jonathan could see it more clearly than me, she thought. She wanted him in a way she had never even imagined before but she had to get away from him before this went any further. She knew she did not have the strength to resist him when they were alone together.

"Jace, we have to go," Alec still kept his eyes on the floor and evidently did not trust Jace to follow on his own.

Jace lifted Clary down from the ledge, then ran his hands up her shoulders to cup her face, forcing her eyes to meet his. He released her then but reached down to hold her hand. "Let's go, then," he said, leading her down behind him.

* * *

><p>You can probably tell I'm a serious Clace fan. I can't help myself.

11. Chapter 11 A Werewolf in Chinatown

As much as Clary tried to assume some semblance of normality, it had just been an incredibly awkward time since the troupe of young shadowhunters assembled together to deal with the werewolf problem in Chinatown. First, Alec, Jace and she had separated to get into their gear and load up with the appropriate weapons. Then, when they had all gathered by the archway, Hodge felt it appropriate to explain their duties and warn them from any excess and undue violence toward the Downworlders, especially with the Accords so soon at hand. Hodge spoke in a worn and self-assured manner, lecturing Izzy, Jace and Alec as the three of them drew runes on one another but at Clary's and Jonathan's appearance he did a double take and barely managed to string five words together. Everyone noticed and Jonathan gave him an icy glare before he switched back to ooze ease and charm, thanking Hodge for his attentions and excusing his nervousness as concern on their behalf. Then, when Clary had unzipped the back of her gear, asking if someone could draw the strength and farsightedness runes on her back, Jace and Jonathan practically crashed into one another with their steles out. It would have been comical if they hadn't almost come to blows and Alec had convinced Jace that her parabatai should do it. Jace withdrew but muttered they weren't parabatai yet. Then there had been the matter of making their way downtown. It seemed the New York shadowhunters were accustomed to using the subways for their trips around the city to avoid the constant traffic of the city streets, their glamour runes protecting them from mundane observation. Everything was fine as they rushed to the nearest subway but once they got on the 1 train, the issue of where she would stand or rather who she would stand with became a problem. Both Jace and Jonathan stood at either side of her and seemed consumed with the other's close proximity. She had finally gotten so fed up with the insane level of testosterone and tension in the tight space that she pushed past them both and sat with Izzy.

"You really ought to handle the two of them better," Izzy whispered. "It's getting ridiculous. They're boys. They need to be trained. Otherwise, they'll just run wild."

Clary looked at her disbelievingly and Izzy had just tutted, "Sera, there is so much I need to teach you."

It didn't help that every time she came within a few feet of Jace her heart started racing so loud she could hear a crazy beating in her ears. She felt certain everyone could hear it and found herself looking fiercely around her to confirm this suspicion. Of course that only garnered several odd looks from four sets of eyes that ranged from bafflement (Alec), disapproving pity (Izzy), undisguised and acute longing (Jace) and a frowning scrutiny (Jonathan). She knew she had to keep her distance from Jace. Whatever the werewolves were up to could not possibly be as nutso as she was behaving. She had to keep her wits about her. Valentine had warned her, often, that werewolves were savage animals that should be put down as soon as they were turned. After all, they had brutally torn apart the

shadowhunter, Michael Wayland and his son. She could not allow herself to be so distracted when dealing with the feral beasts.

They got off the train at the Canal Street station. Clary rushed up the steps to the streets ahead of the rest, not wanting a recurrence of boys behaving badly as Izzy so eloquently put it. The abandoned police station that headquartered the New York pack was only a few blocks east. She decided to race ahead and wait for the others there. She needed to stay away from Jace if she was going to operate with a clear head and she didn't want Jonathan hanging over her either. She heard someone call out to her just before she put her head down and sprinted to the station. They would be together soon enough she figured.

It no longer surprised her how quickly she reached their destination. Unfortunately, the accelerated shadowhunter speed was not sustainable for long but it was an exhilarating run.

The double vision of a glamour assailed her vision when she looked up at the rundown station. The mundane view was a Chinese takeout joint, no seats or tables, delivery orders only. She had to squint a little to see the aged stone surrounding the entrance of the former 3rd Precinct of the Lower East Side Police Station. She stood back across the street deep in the shadows under the canopy of a Chinatown hair salon, long closed for the day, its metal security railings down and tagged with graffiti. The heavy station door swung open and a young werewolf galloped out. It was the last night of a full moon in the current lunar cycle and Clary sensed this particular werewolf was newly turned, couldn't have been more than a few months judging from the frantic roll of its bright blue eyes and its convulsing lycanthropic form. Clary pulled out a seraph blade and held it steadily against her thigh.

The wolf suddenly stopped shaking, lifted its snout and dragged in long mouthfuls of air. It froze and turned its head to face her directly. There was no mistaking it. The animal had spotted her. For a brief second, Clary wondered why the others hadn't arrived yet. She was fast but so were they. At the very least she knew Jonathan and Jace could best her pace. Belatedly, she realized something must have happened to them that waylaid their arrival. She would have to handle this matter herself.

"Kushiel," she hummed and a white beam flashed out of the blade. She spread her feet apart, the handle of the seraph in both hands, ready to swing into action when the beast came for her.

The glow of the seraph lit up the shadows and illuminated her face in a lambent light. The werewolf stumbled back, its jaws gaping open, a long tongue rolling out and its eyes almost doubling in size. Clary could only describe its reaction as stupefied amazement. She had been told werewolves were vicious with the barest traces of their humanity. There was no hiding the seraph blade. The animal must see the threat she posed but it looked at her ardently with some unaccountable but undeniably very human emotion. She stood still, puzzling over this animal that cautiously pawed its way toward her.

It seemed to struggle with itself as it bobbed its head in a peculiar rolling motion. Its face altered, still lupine but the snout had perceptibly shrunk back. "Clllaarrrrrrreeeee," it rasped out.

Clary stood straight, the seraph blade dangling at her side, wondering if she were awake or dreaming. She stepped back until the jangling sound of the security gate arrested her. The animal was only a few steps away from her when a flurry of motion fell down on them and Jonathan kicked out at it, sending the wolf skidding with a pained howl.

The blaze in his eyes and the snarl on his lips made him look more savage than the werewolf.

>"You told him," he growled accusingly at her. She looked at him in astonished wonder. He had been fighting, a bruised cut under his left eye. The gear at his right shoulder was torn in a long rip and his dyed black hair was a wild tangle.<p>

"What happened to you?" she gasped.

He came at her then, his fury unleashed. One hand seized her neck and hauled her up against the metal gates. "What else did you tell him," he spat out.

She had released the seraph blade and both hands clawed at Jonathan's iron fingers that crushed tighter around her throat. She looked pleadingly at Jonathan, unable to make a sound, her lungs screaming for air. She could have kicked out at him or used her fists to strike him but she could not believe he would really hurt her and would not fight him.

"He called you Clary!" Jonathan roared at her, then threw her down on the cement sidewalk.

"No," she managed to scratch out of her throat. "I don't know how it knew my name" she answered weakly, trying to prop up her elbows to lift her head.

"You told JACE!" he bellowed with disgust.

Oh God, he was right. Clary had not even registered it. After they exited the subway, right before she flew away from them, she heard his voice calling out for her but he said Clary, not Sera.

"Jonathan," she whispered in horrified fear. "What did you do? Did you hurt him?" She was terrified. Nothing could happen to Jace.

This was apparently the wrong response. Outrage lined his face. Impossibly, he was even more enraged. He struck her with a backhanded blow that split her lip and drove her back down to the ground. He raised a leg to kick her as she tried to curl into a ball. An extended furry form charged through the air and wrestled Jonathan away with a series of thunderous yelps and growls. The door to the police station flew open and a pack of wolves streamed out. By that point Jonathan had the young wolf in a deadly hold, snapped its back then flung it aside. It made a high keeling whine and slumped to the ground. Clary sat up and crawled over to it, tears unknowingly falling from her eyes. The wolf pack numbered more than a dozen and they circled Jonathan menacingly, vibrating with a deep, low rumble. A large gray wolf made a sudden forward movement that prompted the others to follow its lead. Clary could see Jonathan crouching calmly before them, a mass of sharp teeth and claws outstretched ready to

beset him, when he twisted a silver ring she had never seen before on his right hand and vanished from sight.

She reached the young wolf. She could not even think about the pack of wolves around her somewhere. Was it dead? Did Jonathan kill it? It had sacrificed itself for her. How? Why? Her head was spinning. Her throat still felt sore and raw from Jonathan's chokehold. It hurt to swallow but the tears kept streaming down her eyes. She couldn't tell if it was due to the shock of Jonathan's assault, sorrow for the downed wolf or the terror of not knowing what happened to Jace. The wolf seemed to shimmer as it metamorphosed back to a human shape. It was a boy. He had thick chocolate brown hair. It had run long, snarled and uncut for months. His lashes were a darker shade of brown and spanned long below his closed lids. His olive skin was marred with scratches and a livid swelling of deep blue bruises to come.

"Simon," she cried softly. She was afraid to touch him, not knowing how badly he was hurt.

His eyes fluttered open, "Clary â€| it is you." His own eyes flooded with tears.

She collapsed on him then. Her arms winding around his him as she sobbed heartily in his neck.

"Oww," Simon complained. He slowly lifted an arm and gingerly patted her back. "I heal fast but not that fast. That crazy son of a bitch has got some berserker strength."

Clary raised her head then, struggled to keep her face straight, then burst out with laughter. "Simon, you don't know the half of it â€| and don't call her a bitch." She shook her head knowing she must look like a lunatic laughing and crying at the same time.

Clary felt another set of solid hands lift her up and press her tightly into wide familiar shoulders. It was covered in a soft, frayed fleece shirt that she would know anywhere.

"Luke," she held him tightly. She felt like she was five again, waking up from a terrible nightmare and Luke was there to reassure her she was safe and the monsters couldn't get her. She felt herself shaking violently in his arms.

"She's in shock," Luke informed the others. "Bring him in. I'll take her." He instructed the other men and women that stood by as he picked her up, strong and steady.

"Get your paws off her," a steely voice cut in.

It was Jace, holding two blazing seraph blades. Izzy, with an unleashed electrum whip, and Alec, with an arrow nocked against a long bow, braced him on either side. They all looked worse for wear with fresh iratze runes evident on their bodies. Their gear were torn and brown with dried blood. The gashes had sealed but angry red welts disclosed the source of the clotted blood.

Valentine was remarkably placid while Jonathan fumed. He said nothing as he observed his son who barely ever demonstrated the slightest emotion but was now raging. Clary had betrayed them. They had to get her back. She belonged with them. She had to be taught. He would teach her himself. She was naïve, gullible, stupidly mesmerized by Jace's golden boy, muscle bound charms. A complete idiot could see he would use her and toss her aside. She was nothing to him, a conquest. He was the type of boy that could never get attached. He would suck away her vitality, leave her a dry husk, before he tired of her and discarded her, never giving her a second thought. Valentine could not help but notice how very much this rapacious description fit Jonathan himself. Valentine had ample occasion to witness Jonathan's interactions with male and female subjects during his many years of behavioral training. It was necessary to develop a smooth, charismatic veneer that unfortunately did not come innately to Jonathan.

"This may work to our advantage," Valentine interrupted Jonathan's boiling monologue.

Jonathan ceased pacing and eyed his father suspiciously, "What do you mean?"

"I mean, if there is an attachment between them, it will make them all the easier to manipulate." Valentine envisioned his final triumph over the Clave with his wife, sons and daughter celebrating his eminence. He had abandoned Jace (an interesting nickname that Valentine would not have chosen but made it easier to distinguish him from his own Jonathan) when he realized Jace could not possess the ruthlessness needed to enforce his vision but he had loved him nonetheless and had always hoped to reunite with the boy one day. He did not think it a bad thing if Jace and Clary mated. They were both singularly touched by the angel and he actually could not think of another more gifted shadowhunter who could suitably partner with his progeny. It would also be interesting to see what kind of offspring they would breed given the experiments that were conducted during their own fetal development although he had unknowingly conducted the second experiment on his own issue, kept ignorant of Clary's conception. However, he did not regret it. She had a power he had not imagined but he did not like having her around him. She was almost a mirror image of her mother at that age, when the world was full of possibilities and he had fallen deeply in love but she was also a vivid reminder that Jocelyn had ultimately spurned him and now he knew why. It was her, this child, that compelled Jocelyn to connive against him. She wanted the child more than she wanted him and he despised the girl for it.

If Valentine permitted their love, they would be grateful. He could use their fear of losing each other to control them and if they married he could remove her from his presence. He had no compunction against urging them to marry young. She would reside separately with Jace. He would not need to see her except when he required the use of her powers. He smiled to himself, commending his own strategies. His eyes flicked to Jonathan as he moved toward his father.

"Are you saying you'd let him have her?" Jonathan asked in a deceptively subdued voice.

Valentine said nothing, only watching his son curiously.

"She belongs to me! He doesn't deserve her. He's just a common pretty boy. He's nothing. I incapacitated him in seconds," Jonathan spat venomously.

"I thought you said he didn't care for her, that he doesn't even want her," Valentine replied sedately. "Jonathan, I hope you realize Clary is your sister, not your consort," he measured his words carefully. He was worried about Jonathan. The rabid turn of his eyes and frenzied pacing alarmed Valentine. He had never seen Jonathan so completely lacking self-control.

"Do not attempt to qualify my relationship with my sister," Jonathan answered curtly. "You made me what I am. I am unnatural. Part demon, part angel, part human. There is no one else in the world that can be what she is to me," he snarled.

And what is she?" Valentine questioned in his composed monotone.

"My sister, my goddess, my lover," he answered slowly his hands clenched in tight fists.

Valentine was aghast and tempted to ask his son if he were joking but the concept was too outlandish. They never joked. "I see," was his only response. At one time he would have gotten up, taken Jonathan's underarm, walked him to one of the cells below and beat him senseless. While he knew he still dominated Jonathan he could see this obsession with his sister had unhinged him and made him unpredictable. He sensed Jonathan would not meekly follow his commands where it concerned Clarissa.

"Tell me, Jonathan," Valentine enunciated. "Will Clary agree to these terms in your assumed relationship? Or do you mean to force her, take her against her will?"

"We will come to an agreement," Jonathan said haltingly. "I know her. She will come to me," he continued with more assurance.

"We will have to leave the Manor now," Valentine announced, wanting to change the topic. He would need time to reflect upon this development at length to determine the best course of action. He was disturbed by his son's perverse and incestuous inclination toward his own sister but he had long ago learned to regulate his reactions to his son. He had known the child would be extraordinary, different. He had grown powerful, nourished by a greater demon while forming in his mother's womb, but still Valentine had not comprehended the levels of inhuman cruelty and brutality the child possessed. Lilith had warned him but he had not understood that the child, his son, would not know, share or even desire human attachment until now. He wondered why it should be his own sister that would stir an emotion from the boy. Was it his demon blood that compelled him or her angel blood that lured him? Or was it some depraved mixture of their shared genetics along with both of these elements?

"Where will we go?" Jonathan's obsidian eyes bore into him.

Valentine felt vaguely uneasy returning Jonathan's piercing gaze. "To Renwick's. I've sent Blackwell and Pangborn to ready our quarters. Be ready to leave in five minutes. I must attend to your mother." Valentine got up and left the room still feeling Jonathan's unmoving

eyes on his back.

* * *

><p>Jace had lived many years without fear ever since he arrived at the New York Institute orphaned and alone. But he knew it then, when he woke from the blows that had rendered him unconscious. Alec was anxiously hovering over him tracing iratzes on his body and Izzy was looming above, peering fretfully down at him. His stomach constricted painfully and his heart seemed to stop as an icy chill bloomed in his chest. Clary! Where was she? Was she OK? If Sebastian touched her! He tried to jump up, go to her, find her, but Alec and Izzy steadfastly held him down. A leg was broken and his wounds were deep. He had to stay still a little while longer. It would only cause more injury and further delay to try to move now, they reasoned with him but were practically sitting on him to keep him immobile.<p>

"How long? How long have I been out?" Jace asked hurriedly.

"It hasn't been long," reassured Izzy. "Just stop, Jace. Now can you explain what happened?"

"Sebastian â€| is batshit crazy," Jace shook his head.

"And incredibly fast," Alec muttered. "I've never seen anyone but you move like that. And the way he threw you ... What was he carrying on about? One second he's yelling about someone named Clara? Then the next thing I know he's flailing at you with a sword and throwing you across the street," Alec puzzled.

"Yeah," Jace mumbled shaking his head. A disorienting haze still fogged his head. "I wasn't prepared for that. He won't catch me like that next time."

Who," Izzy interrupted, "is Clara?" She wove her gold electrum whip around her wrist. "And how in Raziel's name did he snap the arrow out of your hand," she turned her head to Alec, "and knock my legs out from under me at the same time?"

Jace propped himself up and found he was strong enough to push Alec and Izzy aside, "Enough, I've got to get to Clary."

"Who the hell is Clary?" both Izzy and Alec sputtered but didn't hesitate to follow Jace as he briskly hobbled to the werewolf headquarters.

It took way longer than it should have to get to the abandoned police station. He had healed enough to run by the time they reached the street corner. His heart stopped at the sight of Clary on the ground. She was clinging to a wolf boy in human form. He was in pretty bad shape from the look of it, some broken ribs, pretty severe welts and bruises but no permanent damage that Jace could see.

When the werewolf leader came up behind her Jace sprang into action, pulling two seraphs out from his inner gear sleeves at the same time summoning the angels, Amitiel and Dumah. He could feel Alec and Izzy tensing for a fight and readying their weapons beside him.

"Get your paws off her," the words came out before it dawned on him. She knew him. She was sobbing uncontrollably but holding onto the

werewolf - middle-aged, medium height, solid build, shaggy brown hair streaked with gray and some bookworm type glasses - with an obvious desperation.

"Who are you?" Jace asked just as the werewolf glared at him and said, "What do you want?"

"Clary," was Jace's only answer.

She turned then and Jace could see the purplish, red handprint at her throat, the dried blood below a split lip and the angry red swelling across her cheek.

"Jace," her voice was low and raspy. "Thank God you're okay. Thank God," she whispered and dropped her head back in a faint.

13. Chapter 13 Wake Up Clary

The wolves growled unhappily, hardly gracious about Jace, Alec and Isabelle's entry into their lair. Luke, the pack leader, held Clary gently, keeping her limp form in his arms while the other wolves lay the injured wereboy in a cot on the other side of the room. Luke sat on an old, worn, leather armchair, his eyes fixed on Clary as he held her protectively in his arms.

Luke would not let the Nephilim children, as he called them, apply iratzes on her. She needs to rest he explained. The iratze would wake her. Let her wake when she's ready then iratze away. Like he knew anything about an iratze.

Izzy was not sure she agreed with the wolfman but she could not deny he cared for her, that he loved her. More than the way he held her, rocking her softly as if she were a baby, but the way he looked at her as if he couldn't stop looking, as if he had to keep looking to make sure she was really there. They had heard the werewolves were flouting the compacts, picking fights with the other downworlders. They were looking for someone and they were looking for answers. It seemed like their restless search was over. They had their answer now.

"By the angel, what is going on?" Izzy let out in a frustrated but quiet voice.

Simon opened his eyes and looked at her curiously. He was kind of cute, thought Izzy. A bit lanky but with the sturdy build of a werewolf, long curling chocolate hair and big brown eyes framed by thick lashes. Disheveled, definitely needs a shower, but cute, very cute. One of the other wolves, Gretchen, Luke called her, had come in, examined the boy, tended to his wounds as he winced with pain then left urging him to take some water and some aspirin. Luke and the shadowhunters had managed to share their names but there had been no other conversation and Izzy was getting pissed. She hated feeling left out and let's face it, that just didn't happen. People, OK boys, always wanted her around, would tell her anything she wanted to hear to get her to stay.

"Let's just get something straight. Sera is Clary. Am I right?" Izzy was not staying quiet any longer.

Jace, who had his arms crossed, slouching in a chair across from Luke, seemed to awaken from some inner dialogue and looked expectantly at Luke. Well she wasn't the only one who wanted some answers.

"I don't know who Sera is, but that's Clary," the cute boy mumbled. He seemed much better than when they first brought him in and was now sitting up. He was no longer covered in dark blue bruises. They had faded to a yellowish brown.

"You know her," Izzy returned. She noticed Jace was closely observing the boy, his eyes narrowing.

"Of course I do. She's my best friend. We've known each other since we were five" I'm Simon, by the way," he ended sheepishly.

"Oh, I'm Isabelle. Izzy," she gave him a small smile and flipped her hair back with a quick snap of her neck. She was satisfied when his eyes widened.

"Why would Clary's best friend be a werewolf?" Jace asked.

Simon turned and silently appraised Jace.

"I haven't been one for long," he answered. His brown eyes seemed to catch the light. They glowed bright blue then darkened back to a burnt umber.

"He was following me," Luke broke in. He had finally lifted his eyes away from Clary. "He didn't know what I am and" he got attacked by a member of the pack. I didn't know until it was too late," he shook his head regretfully at Simon.

"It's not your fault," Simon answered as if he had said the words more times that he could count. "I had to do something. Someone took her and her mom, completely wrecked her apartment and the cops that showed up afterward" they were totally useless and" freaky."

"Probably demons," said Jace languidly. "They have a way of covering each other's tracks."

"Yeah," Simon agreed, "I've had a few demon run-ins since 'the change' and yeah, freaky would describe the experience"

"Wait a minute," Jace sat up suddenly, "You said Clary and her mom went missing" Did they by any chance live in Brooklyn?"

Simon shifted uncomfortably at the rapid change in topic, his eyes turned to Luke questioningly, "uh, yeah, so what?"

"Sera" Clary" is Valentine Morgenstern's daughter? She's" Clary Morgenstern?" Alec looked stunned.

"Her name is Clarissa Fairchild," Luke levelled a steady gaze at the three shadowhunters. "She is Jocelyn Fairchild's daughter. She never knew about Valentine ... until ..."

"The Clave," began Alec, "will need to know"

"No," Luke replied gravely, "the Clave did nothing to help them, to find them. The Clave will only hurt her to try to get to Valentine."

"That's not fair," Izzy spoke up. "They didn't know it was Valentine Morgenstern. Everyone thinks he's dead. The Clave has to know he's still around and God knows what he's up to."

"That's not quite true, is it?" Jace stood up. "Magnus knew. Magnus warned us all but the Clave didn't want to believe it. And we don't know what the Clave will do with Clary."

"They have to protect her. They have to help her. She's a shadowhunter," Alec answered a little uncertainly.

"But she didn't know she was a shadowhunter. She didn't know anything until Valentine took her," Jace frowned.

"It sure looks like she knows she's a shadowhunter now. What did he do to her? What did he tell her? Why was she here? What was she doing? Who is Sebastian? What's his story?" The questions came fast and furious as Izzy tried to make heads or tails of the whole mess.

"Whoa," said a weak, hoarse voice. "Izzy are you in a tizzy?"

Everyone rushed toward Clary, except Luke who just lowered his head to look down at her. Izzy pulled out her stele, ready to apply an iratze. Luke did say as soon as she woke up

Clary's eyes opened wide as they crowded around her and she then seemed to realize she was cradled in Luke's arms.

"Luke, put me down," Clary squirmed out of his arms but kept an arm around his neck. "Thank you." She said softly.

"So, what did I miss?" she asked hesitantly.

"First, we iratze, then we talk," Izzy stepped in. "And by talk, I mean you've got some explaining to do. Major explaining."

* * *

><p>"You look terrible," Izzy commented as she nimbly spun the stele into twists and twirls by Clary's collarbone, just below the ugly bruise around her neck. She wasn't used to seeing Nephilim standing and all beat up, well not for long anyway. The runes generally made quick work of any injuries they suffered although shadowhunter healing was naturally faster than ordinary humans. She was a little surprised Jace didn't insist on taking care of Sera-Clary himself. The new name was going to take some getting used to.<p>

"Well, I don't feel so hot," she sounded better already, stronger. The iratze faded from her skin, glowing white as the bruises seemed to melt away from her skin.

Clary looked hesitantly around at the others. Jace remained quiet. His gaze stayed focused on Clary but he hadn't said a word. Izzy had never seen him keep his mouth shut for so long. She was a little

worried. He always had some snarky remark to contribute. He stood a bit further back from the rest of them, standing tall and wary, as if he expected a bomb, or maybe Sebastian, to drop in front of them.

Clary had learned what happened to Simon while Izzy administered to her wounds. She sat on the armchair that Luke vacated to lean at her side and held Simon's hand tightly as he recounted what he had already told the other shadowhunters before Clary was conscious again.

"So, you know I'm â€¦ Nephilim â€¦ and you're a werewolf â€¦ and Luke â€¦ you're a werewolf â€¦ Is there anyone else I should know about?" she had asked a little wildly.

"No, I think that's it," Simon responded, "Well I've had my suspicions about Joe the Janitor â€¦ that guy's hairier than any werewolf I've seen yet."

Clary shook her head but a small smile formed on her healing lips.

"I'm serious," Simon was emphatic. "That guy's practically got fur coming out of his ears."

"Oh, Simon," sighed Clary. "I've missed you so much. I didn't think I'd ever see you again," she clasped both hands over Simon's.

Simon whitened then reached over to hug Clary, "What happened? Please tell us. I was so worried about you. I couldn't think straight. I haven't been able to think straight since that night you disappeared."

"I â€¦ I don't know if I can," Clary stuttered. "I'm sorry. I just don't know what he'll do â€¦ He's â€¦ powerful. He's not an ordinary shadowhunter. He has â€¦ special abilities. He can summon demons to his bidding and â€¦ he knows things â€¦ things nobody else knows."

"You mean Valentine?" Simon asked, his face screwed up with concern.

Alec and Izzy leaned forward as if they could pull the information they needed out of Clary. Luke's face blazed at the mention of Valentine but Jace remained a statue. Still and quiet, just listening and watching Clary.

"You already know so much â€¦ too much. He'll see you as a threat. He will hurt you," Clary looked warningly at Simon, then Luke moving onto Izzy and Alec, leaving Jace for last. Her eyes lingered with him. Her face crumpled and she swiftly looked away.

"It's my fault. If I just didn't lose control. I wasn't supposed to â€¦ I knew what would happen if â€¦ I just," her eyes were magnetically drawn back to Jace.

"Ser â€¦ Clary, do you need a little privacy with Jace? I get the feeling you two need to talk â€¦ alone," Izzy offered, realizing there was a lot of unspoken tension between the two of them. And anything that would help to loosen Clary's lips would be a big

help.

"What are you smiling about?" Alec asked her, noticing the small grin that escaped her own lips.

"Nothing. Just a play on words in my own head. I crack myself up sometimes," Izzy said simply. Speaking of lips, she glanced at Simon who looked pretty good now. The yellowish brown bruises had all but vanished although he still had the large gauze bandages wrapped around his ribs but Izzy suspected he might not need those now either. She wondered what he had looked like before he turned all wolfy. She suspected he was probably not quite so buff. Something about the way he held himself like he wasn't used to having muscle tone that should be showcased.

Clary seemed to notice Izzy's interest. She furrowed her brow for a brief moment but then her face lit up as an idea seemed to pop into her head "Geez, Simon. Maybe you should cover up the bod a little. I think it's distracting some of us."

"Wha â€| ?" Simon looked at her with the cutest confused face ever.

OK, get a grip, Izzy thought. Why do I feel like I'm panting over this guy. He's sort of geeky. Hot geeky.

"Izzy, you're right. I think Jace and I do need a moment to ourselves," Clary stiffened her back with resolve. "Jace, do you mind?" she looked at him anxiously.

Jace just nodded his head. It was seriously like he just lost the ability to speak. Weird. Izzy knew he liked, like seriously liked, Clary. Hell, she didn't really know what he felt about her but she knew she had never seen him act this way around another girl. She knew from that first night they had all met, he had stared at Clary like he was in neck deep and sinking fast. She knew he had practically broken another arm and leg wrestling with Alec and her to get back to Clary when he thought she was in danger. She could also imagine though that this whole 'she's Valentine's daughter for Chrissakes and that evil dude obviously sent her here for some nefarious plot' couldn't be a real relationship builder.

"Clary, are you sure you're well enough? Don't you think you should lie down a little longer?" asked Luke attentively.

"Yeah," Simon agreed as he shrugged on a flannel button down shirt Luke handed to him. "Maybe you don't want to be alone â€| with Jace â€| right now." Simon eyed Jace cautiously. It was pretty clear something wasn't kosher between the two of them and he stood near Clary in a shielding stance.

"Simon, don't worry," Clary cleared her throat. "Jace, wouldn't hurt me." She looked at him questioningly, willing him to confirm her words.

"Well, he's a shadowhunter, isn't he?" Simon peered at Clary searchingly. "They don't exactly have a stellar track record keeping you safe as far as I'm concerned."

"Simon, I'm a shadowhunter. I keep myself safe," Clary answered

firmly.

"But that crazy dude â€¦" Simon started.

"No, Simon," Clary cut him off. "That was different. I couldn't fight him then. He's my â€¦ It doesn't matter now. I would fight him now. He's not â€¦ who I thought he was."

"My God," Luke seemed to sag with understanding. "Is he â€¦?"

"Luke, please, we'll talk about this after I speak with Jace, please," Clary asked beseechingly.

"OK, Clary. Fifteen minutes. Then we have to talk. We have to get your mother back." Luke's calm demeanor before Clary had woken, while he held her and watched her reassuringly, was gone.

Izzy followed Luke, Alec and Simon out the door. She was the last to leave and could see Clary approach Jace slowly, cautiously, their eyes glued on each other.

14. Chapter 14 To Divine

Clary bit her lip. She had no idea what to say to Jace. She had no idea what she could say to Jace. How would she keep him safe? She had gotten used to seeing his golden eyes ignited with emotion when he looked at her, smirking amusement, artless glee, burning passion, serene bliss, anxious concern. They were now dull and shuttered. There was no tenderness behind them as far as she could see. He doesn't trust me Clary realized. She couldn't blame him. She understood why he wouldn't want anything more to do with her. She had deceived him.

When the others had left, she had let herself draw close to him, wanting his touch, wanting him to hold her as brief as it might be, knowing she should stay away from him. He hadn't moved at all. She couldn't even tell if he was breathing and when she touched his arm, he had stiffened. She dropped her hand quickly then.

As much as she wanted to turn and walk away, to protect her own fragile ego, she knew that wasn't an option. She had to lay the groundwork. She had to keep him safe.

"Jace, I know you must hate me," she kept her eyes down. She didn't want to look into his barren eyes anymore. "I'm sorry. I was doing the only thing I could do. I'm a soldier. I do as I'm told or at least I'm supposed to." Clary imagined facing Valentine again. He would be livid. He would punish her and he would eliminate the others. He would not allow the Clave to find out about him before he had the mortal cup. That was it. She had to find it. She had to bring it back to him. It was the only way to save them. And she had to keep Jace away from Valentine. Valentine seemed to care for Jace but Clary knew Jace would never be safe around him. Valentine would use him like he used her, like he used Jonathan.

"Was it all a lie?" Jace spoke at last in a quiet murmur. "What you said â€¦ how you feel about me?"

"No, no â€¦ how could you think that? I meant what I said in the

greenhouse. I shouldn't have told you but I couldn't keep it in. I thought I could give you that one true piece of me and go and I'm sorry. If I just stuck to the plan, you would be safe." Clary was overwhelmed by a wave of despair that rushed over her.

Clary almost cringed when she felt Jace's long steady fingers wrap around her arms. She didn't know what to expect, that he would push her away, but then she felt those steady hands trembling and had to see what was on his face. She lifted her head and felt his mouth come crashing down on hers. It was a different type of kiss from the ones they had already shared. It was hard and demanding and it was exactly what she needed. Her arms reached around his waist. His hands gripped her shoulders then snaked around her back and pressed her tight against him as he bent over her, folding over her. One hand traveled slowly down her spine and the way their bodies fit into each other was so intensely intimate it felt like they were one person. There was nothing else in that moment but Jace, his hard, lean body sculpted against hers, claiming every part of her, making her apart of him. She breathed him in as their mouths moved together, tasting each other, their tongues dancing, brushing against the other.

Jace finally broke away, leaning his forehead over the top of her head as they both panted for air. They were still holding onto each other, their arms encased around the other, their bodies tightly embraced.

"I could do that forever but Luke did say fifteen minutes," he said. She could feel him smiling against her head. "Next time, we do this behind a locked door, somewhere nobody can barge into," he laughed softly.

Clary kept her face pressed to his chest moving her hands up and down the side of his body pushing her own slight but throbbing chest into his.

"If you keep doing that I can't be held responsible for my actions," he breathed into her ear.

"I am I'm sorry. You just make me want to feel everything," she sighed against him. "I love you." She shook her head into him but loosened her grip and backed away.

He stopped her and when she brought her eyes back up to meet his she could see everything that he had held back before.

"I'm dying here," his voice was rough. "I would die for you."

"Stop. Stop it, Jace," she said firmly. "I never want to hear you say that. I never want that to be true. I only exist if you live." Clary wondered at the truth in her words. She wondered how quickly this happened. She wondered that she had the courage to say these things. She hadn't even known him a week ago and now she couldn't exist without him.

It felt like they just stood there staring at each other in a time loop. He was the most beautiful thing she could imagine and if she did nothing but stand there and stare at him she could be completely content.

"Ahem," an overly loud voice cleared its throat.

They were only just standing, his hands gripping her shoulders, her hands clasped on his waist but somehow it felt like they were interrupted at a deeply private moment.

"So you two â€¦" Simon stood by the door, "have a thing?" His eyes flashed a bright blue and Isabelle, behind him, put a hand on his shoulder.

"I think that would be an understatement," she whispered. "Listen, kids," she continued more audibly, "hate to disturb this magical moment and all, but we really got to figure out what we're doing."

Clary turned to Isabelle, nodding her head slowly. "Yes, we have to find the mortal cup. That's the only way to end this."

* * *

><p>The shadowhunters made their way back to the New York Institute. Clary didn't know what she was doing. She just knew she had to keep them away from Valentine. She knew he would not show them any mercy. She knew he only tolerated her because she was his own flesh and blood. She tried to give them as little information as she could. She told them she didn't know where Valentine kept them. It was a large house. Somewhere isolated, away from any other homes, just a lot of green fields. That was already too much as Luke and the shadowhunters guessed Valentine was hiding in Idris. They wanted to know what kind of special abilities he possessed, that Clary had mentioned. What would he do with the mortal cup? What was his plan? She described how he carried Jocelyn's unconscious form through some invisible force, how she saw him call on various demons who obeyed his commands as if he were their master, that he had some unknown means of disappearing into another dimension and forming wards and glamours that went beyond what shadowhunters had access to with their runes. She tried to impress on them the danger he represented. That for their own good, they needed to stay away from him. She slumped with failure as the young shadowhunters grew animated, guessing at how he acquired these powers, heedless to the peril she tried so hard to convey. She only knew Valentine planned to assemble a new breed of shadowhunters with the cup, one that he planned to rule over.<p>

Luke was more keenly interested in Jocelyn's welfare. Was he hurting her? Where was she imprisoned? At least Clary could answer Luke's questions openly. She was in some sort of spellbound coma placed on her by a warlock before Valentine found them. Even as she narrated Valentine's story to Luke and the others, she knew it didn't make sense. The Clave wasn't interested in finding her or her mother according to the others, so why had they sent a warlock to capture her? But that was all she had to go by. She realized she may be as lost to the truth as they were.

It had been difficult to convince Alec and Izzy not to immediately notify the Council but they gradually agreed to wait to discuss the entire matter with Hodge. Jace was less difficult to convince. He was worried about Clary and worried what the Clave would do to her. Luke and Simon had no confidence in the Clave and Luke was as anxious as Clary to find the cup to bargain with Valentine for Jocelyn's release.

It was very late by the time they trudged back to the Institute. Even Alec and Izzy conceded to sleep and further discussion in the morning. Jace had walked Clary to her room. He was not immune to fatigue but he had held her and kissed her gently before he left for his own bed.

"What are you holding back?" he had asked her. "We have each other now. You will never be alone again," he whispered.

But she was alone now. In her room, alone with her thoughts and fear. Fear for Jace, fear for Luke, Simon, Izzy and Alec. She had changed into a t-shirt and sleeping shorts and sat on her bed trying to figure out what she needed to do. How to appease Valentine? How to rescue her mother? How to prevent any harm to the people she loved and cared for? And then she had another thought. Clary got up and pulled out her stele from the pocket of her gear. She walked over to the wall and drew the divining rune. She had not been tempted to use it again since the first time. There was something vaguely threatening about the thick slashing lines, a warning to its user that they opened a Pandora's box. It pulsed, waiting for her direction.

"Jace Wayland," she said softly.

The shadows seemed to war with each other as sizzling colors crossed against each other in lightning strikes. And then Jace appeared as a small boy. She recognized the green fields from the Wayland Manor home in Idris. He had a powerful and splendidly regal falcon on his gloved arm. Its feathers a sleek outline of blues and greys. It wore a hood, its head turning from left to right as it clutched Jace's arm. There was no trepidation in its movements. It completely trusted Jace and Jace's golden eyes were bright with pride and affection for the magnificent bird. A large hand came down, gripping the falcon below the plumage at its neck and then another hand held the head and twisted quickly. The bird went slack and dropped to the ground. The vision reeled back to identify the owner of the merciless hands. It was Valentine, a younger Valentine but easily recognizable. Then the scene changed to another Jace. Still young, but a few years had passed. He held a stele tightly in his hand. He was in a tight enclosed space, a closet, and he drew a viewing rune to look through its door. There was Valentine again. He struggled with a pair of shadowhunters dressed in gear. As he grappled with one hulking opponent, the other pulled out a long sword and plunged it into Valentine's back. He collapsed, blood flowing heavily out of his wound and seeping into the closet floor as Jace watched, both hands pressed tightly against the door, his body completely frozen in place, golden eyes wide with shock and grief. Another Jace appeared. It looked like little time had passed since the last image but this Jace was different. He stood remote and guarded, his head bowed. His blond hair hung low almost covering his lifeless eyes. Maryse appeared, crouched down before him, held him and stroke his head cautiously. Behind her, stood Alec and Isabelle as children, their curious gazes lingering on Jace. Another Jace materialized. Her Jace, but not her Jace. He looked like her Jace, the same height, build, hair. He was training and relentless. His skin was taut over the flexing muscles of his body, gleaming with sweat. He was magnificent. Jace was in mid-flight, his right leg outstretched in a kick when his gear seemed to weave over his body and now he was demolishing demons. Running head first into the attack, well ahead of Alec and Izzy who quickly followed his lead. Izzy's whip lashing out to his left while

Alec's arrows bolted out to his right. He had a single minded determined focus and just as a demon lurched over Alec, who was unaware of its presence, its talons only inches from carving into him, Jace flung Alec aside and absorbed the demon's cut at the same time the blades seemingly attached to his arms removed its head from its black ichor spewing body. The vision shifted again and there was Jace, but this time she was there too. Clary gasped at the sight of herself but Jace was the star of this show and there was a light in his eyes that hadn't been there in the earlier images. She recognized the scene when they had first met and he stood there, stunned at the sight of her, but there was a change in the way he held himself that she had not known at the time. Gone was the slack nonchalance, the void that seemed to follow him in the other visions. The spark in his eyes spoke volumes. And then there was a final scene. Somehow she knew this was the end. The future was enveloped in a fog that made it difficult to make out any details but there was Jace. His golden head and angelic beauty unmistakable even in the clouded haze. He was beaten, badly, seemed to barely have the strength to stand on his feet but held a sword in both hands without a tremor. He held it against Valentine, a red bloom appearing where the sharp tip of the sword met Valentine's chest. And then â€| Valentine struck so fast it was blinding. In his hands, his own broad sword, only the hilt of it visible as blood streamed out of Jace's chest. And the light, the glow of life in Jace's eyes drifted away. And that was it. The vision did not bother to fade away. It immediately turned pitch black as if it perished with Jace.

* * *

><p>Small tribute to the late, great artist, Prince. The sexiest man in heels.

15. Chapter 15 A Night to Remember

OK. Just a warning. I think this chapter earns the Mature rating.

* * *

><p>Clary could not stop shaking. Her worst fears displayed, uncovered and raw in her mind's eye. Jace would die. Jace would die at Valentine's hand. She could no longer hold onto that small part of her that wanted to believe somehow things would work out, that somehow they would get the upper hand and defeat Valentine. But that was precisely what she had to do. She had to destroy him. It was the only way to save Jace and that was the only thing that mattered now. She loved her mother. She loved Luke. She loved Simon but none of that mattered compared to ensuring Jace's survival. And now she really understood how true it was when she told him she only existed if he lived. If he died, there would be no Clary. Whatever she was would just completely cease to be if he didn't breathe. Even if she herself did not survive at least there would be some vestige of her if Jace lived. Her heart and mind were set at that moment. It was selfish. It was the most selfish thing she could do and she knew it.<p>

Clary wiped away the tears that flowed down her face. She washed her face and examined herself in the bathroom mirror. She stepped into the shower and cleansed her body. She let her hands travel up and

down the toned curves that had been painstakingly etched out over the months of grueling training. She had this one night to let go, let herself immerse herself in a love that made everything else pale in comparison. She stepped out of the shower and toweled herself dry. Her hair was still damp but that didn't matter. She went through her clothes and found a sheer cotton nightgown, hardly what she was hoping for but it would be easy to pull off and that would suit. A part of her could hardly believe how easily this all came to her. How she hardly blushed at the thought of what she was set to do. But that part was instantly smothered by the growing desire in her breast. She put on the nightgown and nothing else, then left her room. She hesitated when she reached his room. She knew what she wanted but how would he take it? He knew when she was keeping things from him but he loved her and he would not force anything from her. She knocked on his door. She felt a flush through her body as she waited. The reality of what she was doing felt suffocating and she almost turned back to her room when the door opened. Jace looked surprised to see her. He had been asleep and his golden eyes were squinting from the lighted hallway. He was bare chested, only wearing blue pajama pants. She did not allow him to speak. She just moved in, placed her hands around his neck and kissed him with all the fervor and desire that electrified her body. The thin cotton gown was all that separated her from his naked chest and she flattened her breasts against him. He was startled but recovered quickly. His arms wrapped around her back. She could feel their rapid hearts beating as one and she knew she would not turn back from this moment. This was what she wanted, what she needed. Whatever else happened after tonight, she would have this night. She pushed him into the room and shut the door with a backward kick of her leg. It was dark in his room. Their kiss deepened and every nerve ending soared. She knew she was practically forcing herself on him but he didn't seem to object. She kept pressing their bodies toward his bed until she pushed him down on it and then straddled over him. Finally she pulled her mouth away and let herself look at him. Moonlight streamed in from a window and she could make out his exquisite face, the hard curves of his bare chest, the perfectly framed abdomen, the way the muscles tightened under his heavy breath, the tapering waist. She bent her head down and kissed every inch of his exposed chest.

"Clary â€|," he groaned. "What â€|?"

She covered his mouth with her own to silence his questions and lowered the nightgown off her naked body.

She couldn't see his expression but immediately felt him tense everywhere and then his hands moved, his mouth moved everywhere. He flipped their bodies and lowered himself over her to suck on her neck, her shoulders, her breasts, her stomach and she gasped as she felt his kisses at the apex of her thighs. She urged him back up. She needed him. She needed his mouth on hers. She needed to feel the length of his body lined up against her own. He was trembling as he met her lips again. She used her legs to push his pajama pants off and could feel the hard throbbing heat between his legs pressed against her thighs. There was no hesitancy in her movements as she rolled her hips against his and let the wetness between her legs smear up his thigh. She could feel his self control break through the dams. She closed her eyes, memorizing the feel of his body, gripping every part of him against her, inside her slowly, gently, when she whispered he was her first and only, then more pounding and insistent, and finally the uncontrollable release of their conjoined

bodies.

* * *

><p>Jace woke up in a daze. It was much later in the day than he would usually get up judging by the daylight streaming in through the window. It took half a second before he remembered why, what he had been doing for hours the night before and did again after a brief euphoric interlude. She had finally passed out, succumbing to sleep sometime in the early morning hours and he could drink in the full sight of her in the dawning light, creamy skin, adorable freckles sprinkled over her button nose, the coppery highlights in her long red curls spread across her back as she slept soundly on her stomach, his arm below her head, the downy feel of her body next to his. The recollection brought a jolt and a piercing need to have her back in his arms, under his body, quivering below him and her legs wrapped around him. He was alone in his bed and the smile that had formed on his face slid away as he realized she wasn't there with him anymore.<p>

He swung his legs over the bed, finding his discarded pajama pants on the floor and pulled them on. He walked over to his bathroom to see if he could find her there but it was empty. He combed his fingers through his hair in frustration. Why would she slip out like that? Why wouldn't she at least let him know she was leaving? She was all hot or cold. Not that he didn't thoroughly appreciate the hot periods but the cold was driving him insane. She was worth it, of course, but he really wished he knew what was going through her mind. He knew she was terrified of Valentine. He supposed this fear had her living on the edge of a knife. He just wished she could see he would do everything and anything to keep her safe and that she trusted him to do that. He placed his head in his hands, both hands fisted in his hair.

There was a knock at his door and Jace jumped up. He walked swiftly to the door and opened it. The eager hope on his face dampened at the sight of Alec.

"Well, I gotta say you're making me feel very wanted right now. Let me guess, you were hoping for someone else, someone about a foot smaller, red hair?" Alec's eyes moved over Jace. "You do know it's almost noon, don't you? Don't tell me I just woke you up now."

"I didn't sleep well," Jace answered, crossing his arms. "Is there something you need?"

"Duh, Jace. We need to talk with Hodge. Luke and Simon are here, too. There's still a lot to figure out, man." Alec looked at Jace a bit confounded. "Did you actually forget?"

Jace shrugged. "I'll be out in five. Let me just get washed and dressed." Jace was about to shut the door, then stopped. "Hey, is Clary with Luke and Simon? How long have the wolves been here?" Jace asked casually.

Alec eyed Jace doubtfully. "Yeah, she's with them." Alec snorted, "She practically shot out like a bat out of hell when they got here. They were heading to her room to wake her and then there she was. If I didn't know better I'd say she's wired on a triple espresso."

Jace had nothing to say and only responded with a blank look.

"Whatever, man. Get your head out of la-la land, then get your ass in gear. We meet in the library," Alec shook his head and walked away.

Jace closed the door and stepped into the shower. He couldn't help thinking about Clary as the hot water caressed him. He had known the sex would be incredible, the way their every touch, every kiss possessed and inflamed him but he had not expected to find out so soon or to find out their bodies were made for each other. Even though she was so small, every part of her fit him perfectly. And as playful, flirtatious and passionate as she was, he had not been surprised that she was a virgin. It was as if their bodies knew they were meant to be together and once they were near each other, caution and reason evaporated, their bodies took control. Jace smacked his head against his hands. Jesus, he didn't use anything and he was always on top of that. But, she did things to him, things that made it impossible to think straight. It struck him then. That had been precisely what Simon said, that he hadn't been able to think straight since her disappearance. Jace moved faster than he thought he ever had before, finished washing, dressing and was racing out of his room, water flying from his wet hair.

* * *

><p>Clary was nestled between Luke and Simon, sitting on an old fashioned, Victorian style, upholstered couch in the library. She had woken next to Jace, her body humming as if it were an instrument that had been strenuously but expertly played over and over again. She allowed herself the luxury of lying there and watching his peaceful slumber. She wanted to touch him. She wanted to cover him with feather light kisses all over. She wanted to pretend they had forever, together, in his bed. And then she heard the distinct sounds of the groaning metal gates as the elevator doors opened. Her ears perked at the sound of footsteps down the long hallways and then voices. Luke! Simon! They were talking with Hodge who was escorting them into the library. They were asking about her! Where was she? Was she still asleep? At that moment Clary was consumed by abject terror. She wasn't sure why she was so afraid other than the sheer embarrassment of having them confronted with the knowledge she was not the little girl they knew. No, by all rights, she was a wanton hussy. She had not even thought about using some kind of protection although to be fair she was out of her mind and did not expect a long happy future for herself now that mission one was to waste Valentine, her father. Now was not the time for this! Now she had to get out there and convincingly play an innocent, pre-ravaged Clary for Luke and Simon's benefit. She found Jace's stole and quickly traced silence and speed runs on her ankles. She couldn't leave without one swift kiss below Jace's ear by his jawline and then she took off for her room. So now here she was, her head drooping onto Simon's shoulder, the adrenaline rush definitely fizzling out.<p>

"Clary," Simon whispered. "We have to talk â€| alone."

Luke was talking with Hodge. They knew each other from their youth and conversed about days past, what they had been doing for all these years, but there was an underlying tension that kept them stiff and formal with each other.

"Where are the others?" Hodge voiced uncomfortably. He sat behind the large marble slab desk with the raven stationed at his shoulder.

"Isn't that Hugin? Valentine's bird?" Luke's eyes were fixed on the large raven. The raven seemed to return Luke's observation, bobbing its head.

"It's been with me since I was cast out of Idris," was Hodge's sole response.

"Can you excuse us for a few minutes?" Simon asked standing up and reaching out to pull Clary up.

"Why not?" Hodge replied, disgruntled. "We might as well wait for you two while we're waiting for everyone else."

"Be back in five minutes," Luke added. His gaze remained on Hodge and Hugin.

Simon and Clary stepped out of the library and walked to the end of the hallway where they sat on window seats, a view of the busy mid-day traffic and pedestrians below them.

Simon held Clary's hand and commanded her attention, holding her chin to face him. "Now tell me. Tell me what is going on with you and Jace."

Clary was startled by Simon's directness. He was not the same boy she had left more than six months ago but as she stared into his warm brown eyes she also knew he was still her best friend, someone she trusted and someone with whom she would always share so many happy childhood memories.

"I love him," she answered simply. There was nothing else to say.

Simon breathed in quickly, then exhaled long and slow. A turmoil of emotions swirled on Simon's face that Clary could not identify. She just sat and watched silently, her hand still in his, her face still cupped in his other hand and then his face smoothed into one expression that she could recognize, acceptance.

"You know, I always thought it would be you and me." He tenderly skimmed her cheek with his thumb. "But I can tell it's true. I could tell when I saw you two together at the station," Simon's voice broke and he closed his eyes. "I love you, you know," he said evenly. "Blondie better be good to you." Simon opened his eyes then and Clary was relieved. She could see he was hurt but there was no bitterness, no rejection of the friendship they had forged over a decade ago.

"I'm sorry, Simon," she turned her lips into his hand and kissed it. "I never knew."

"I guess," Simon shrugged, "it just wasn't meant to be." He inhaled then blew out through his mouth. "OK, Fray. I'll say this much for shadowhunters. They sure make them pretty." Simon stopped and smiled, "Just to be clear, I don't mean Jace."

"Oh, I'm sure I can find many, many people who would disagree with you there," Jace stood a slight distance away, looking surprisingly flustered considering his leisurely tone.

"Jace," Clary stood up as Simon let his hands fall away from her. She glided over to Jace and it was like a replay of the scene he had witnessed the night before. The two of them, staring at each other like there was nothing else to see, her hands on his waist, his hands around her back.

"I don't believe this," Simon got up, shaking his head. "Seriously, you two, let's get back to the library."

16. Chapter 16 Library Conversations

Alec watched Clary circumspectly, standing back close to the library entrance. The rest of the group were seated in a circle around the large marble desk that Hodge perched behind. Just like the night before she was doing her damndest to persuade them off a pursuit of Valentine and informing the Clave. He didn't doubt Valentine was dangerous, an infamous criminal who apparently faked his own death and evaded the Clave for as long as Alec had been aware of the man's history. He didn't doubt Clary's fears or concerns. She was shaking as she begged them to keep the Clave away. He just didn't like it. He was an adult shadowhunter now and the Clave would not easily forgive a grown shadowhunter's break from protocol. He looked over at Hodge. Hodge was their tutor since they lived at the NY Institute, so basically forever, and certainly more of an adult than him. But Hodge seemed unusually perturbed by the wolves' presence and did not have much to say, only occasionally nodding as Clary heatedly argued that they should find the cup and let her alone barter with Valentine. She was his child. She knew him. She could get him to agree to their conditions, free her mother, without bringing any of them under Valentine's notice. Of course nobody would agree to this, especially not Jace who was practically draped around her sitting next to her on a couch. Alec was beginning to wonder about Jace's sanity. Alec had seen Jace with girls before, lots of girls. They generally followed him around in a giggling horde and he always had an easy charm around them but a blatant take it or leave it attitude. Now, all he exuded was 'take it, take me please or I'll die.' Even he had more dignity than that, at least he really hoped he did. Alec looked up at the gold gilt clock sitting on top of a shelf behind Hodge.

"Clary, that's just not happening," Luke said sternly. "You may think you know Valentine but you've only been with him less than a year. If I know anything about that man, I know he's been less than forthcoming with you."

"Then tell me. Tell me what you know about him." Clary looked at Luke apprehensively.

"Yes, I will. You deserve to know the truth. All these years, your mother wanted to protect you but it didn't work." Luke looked sadly at Clary. "She loves you so much. You were â€| are her first priority. God, we'll get her back." He took Clary's hand. "But Clary, there's something I need to know. Who is Sebastian?" The look on Luke's face told Clary he already knew who Sebastian was. Clary wondered how much Luke knew about her parents. What was he to them?

Valentine would not allow her to mention his name.

"I think you know," answered Clary. "He's my brother. His name is Jonathan."

Hodge rocked back on his seat abruptly sending Hugin up in the air. The bird took flight and flapped out of the room.

"That was Jonathan," croaked Hodge. "We thought he died."

"Yes, just like we thought Valentine was dead," Luke responded soberly.

"Why?" asked Simon. "Why would your brother hurt you?" He looked angry remembering how Jonathan had choked and beat Clary.

"I was only with Valentine for six months," Clary said softly. "Jonathan was raised by Valentine. He belongs to him. He is Valentine's weapon. When he found out I told Jace my name, he knew I couldn't keep up the ruse. He only acted out as Valentine would have him do."

"No," Simon replied firmly. "That was some personal shit. He wasn't just following orders. That asshole was really angry, like demented angry."

"He â€¦," Clary began, "He's always been sort of strange about â€¦ what he expects from me." Clary stammered trying to reason it out in her own head.

"That nut job better not think about coming near you again," Jace pronounced menacingly, looking pretty furious himself.

"Jace," Clary looked imploringly at him, "he's my brother. Other than that â€¦ moment â€¦ he's always been good to me. He kept me sane all those months being â€¦ programmed by Valentine. If â€¦ if we can â€¦ if it's possible â€¦ I would save him too."

"Jocelyn," Luke broke in, "she needs to know. She's been mourning him all this time. That box â€¦ with the blonde hair â€¦"

"Oh," rushed Clary, "that was his hair â€¦ Jonathan's. I always thought they were keepsakes of my father."

"You two don't really look alike," Izzy noted. "And Sebastian has black hair."

"It's called hair dye," Jace shook his head at her.

"So, he's a blonde?" Izzy continued. "That black hair really didn't work for him."

"Yeah, Iz, way to focus," Jace sparred.

Izzy screwed up her face at Jace then turned to say something to Alec. "Where's Alec?"

"He was right there," Jace answered nodding to the empty space by the library door.

"Really? Thanks. So helpful," Izzy rolled her eyes.

"Luke," Clary interrupted with a huff. "Now you have something to tell. I need to know the truth."

Luke looked around at the assembled party and seemed to consider. "Are you sure you want to hash all of this out now? Maybe we should talk alone."

"It's OK, Luke," Clary squeezed her hand over Jace's. "We should all know what we're up against."

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><p>"So," Clary said resolutely, "my father is a lying bastard." Clary was grateful Jace had his arm around her. She felt dizzy after Luke explained his sordid history with Valentine. She tried to swallow but it felt like there was a giant lump growing in her throat. She turned her face into Jace's chest. How could she be so stupid? She knew his stories just didn't add up. She really believed he wanted to protect her mother, their family, but in truth her mother was trying to escape him. This made sense. Only an evil, lying, psychotic bastard could hurt Jace. She would not consider the possibility that Jace would die. She would not let that happen. There had to be a reason that she had this gift with the runes. Why she was able to see the possibility that Valentine would harm Jace. It had to be her destiny to stop Valentine, to end him and his horribly wicked plans. But she would need the cup. She had to lure him out with the cup.<p>

It felt so good to snuggle into Jace's arms. It almost wiped away the shivering fear that they only had a short time together. She moved her head up and grazed his neck with her lips. She felt him stiffen but kept his arms firmly around her.

He lowered his head. "Baby, maybe you shouldn't do that right now. I really don't think your possibility that Luke or Simon would enjoy that show," he whispered.

"Did you just call me Baby?" her head popped up and she couldn't keep the smile off her face.

Luke frowned. "Are you two possibility dating?"

"Sickening, isn't it?" Simon answered, his face flinching.

"Are you OK, Sweetcakes?" Izzy asked him reaching over to pat his arm.

"What did you call me?" Simon looked at her incredulously.

"Oh, it's nothing. That's just how we talk around here. Jace likes Baby. I like Sweetcakes." Izzy smiled.

"Uh. OK," Simon sputtered. "You can call me that."

The library door swung open and Alec walked in. "We have some more company."

Behind him was Magnus Bane.

End
file.